This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

Library
of the
University of Wisconsin

M2-S-6

University of Wisconsin Library

Manuscript Theses

Unpublished theses submitted for the Master's and Doctor's degrees and deposited in the University of Wisconsin Library are open for inspection, but are to be used only with due regard to the rights of the authors. Bibliographical references may be noted, but passages may be copied only with the permission of the authors, and proper credit must be given in subsequent written or published work. Extensive copying or publication of the thesis in whole or in part requires also the consent of the Dean of the Graduate School of the University of Wisconsin.

This thesis by..... has been used by the following persons, whose signatures attest their acceptance of the above restrictions.

A Library which borrows this thesis for use by its patrons is expected to secure the signature of each user.

NAME AND ADDRESS	DATE

THE NATIONAL NOMINATING CONVENTION.

by

CARL LOTUS BECKER.

A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of

BACHELOR OF LETTERS

in the

Civic Historic Course.

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN

1896

AWM
.B388
C195

416434
JAN 11 1935
AWM
B3881

CONTENTS.

Introduction.

I. First Period. No Nominations and Electors Free. 1788-1792.

II. First Transitional Period. 1796-1800.

III. The Legislative Caucus. 1804-1824.

a. National Caucuses from 1804-1824.

b. Significance of the Caucus and Causes of its downfall.

IV. Second Transitional Period. 1828.

a. Nominations of 1828.

b. The Convention idea---State and National compared.

c. Suggestions for a National Convention before 1830.

V. Organization of the National Convention.

a. National Conventions of 1832.

b. Further Developement of the Whig and Republican Convention.

c. Further Developement of the Democratic Convention.

d. Growth of the idea of Authority.

e. Two Types of Convention; developed on lines of Localism and Centralization.

APPENDIX I.

Nominations Prior to 1788.

APPENDIX II.

The Platform.

BIBLIOGRAPHY.

INTRODUCTION.

The Nominating Convention is doubtless a product of the fundamental ideas of English political institutions;--the ideas, namely, of the participation or representation of the people in their own government. Mr. Schouler suggests that its origin may be traced back through the continental congress and the English parliament, to the Whig and Tory strife of 1688. But its representative idea, and indeed the representative idea of the English parliament itself, takes us far beyond the Whig and Tory strife of 1688. It takes us to the very germ of English political life.

Theoretically, therefore, we may fancy our present institution thus linked to past conditions; but practically, in dealing with the Nominating Convention in the United States, sufficient accuracy will be obtained by limiting the investigation to a period beginning with the election of the first president under our present constitution.(1)

Before taking up the main subject matter, however, some confusion may be avoided by attempting to define and distinguish certain terms which have been used more or less interchangeably and vaguely. The terms in question are (1) Legislative Caucus (2) Mixed Legislative Caucus and (3) Nominating

(1) For suggestions on the method of nomination prior to 1788, see Appendix I.

Convention. I will define them briefly as follows:-

1. A Legislative Caucus is an assembly of members of a legislature, state or national, for the purpose of influencing or deciding the nomination of a candidate for a public office.

2. A Mixed Legislative Caucus is an assembly of members of a legislature and of delegates elected by the people, for the purpose of deciding or influencing a nomination.

3. A Nomination Convention is an assembly of delegates elected by the people or the representatives of the people, also for the purpose of influencing or deciding a nomination.

The term Congressional Caucus is used by writers quite as commonly as the term Legislative Caucus, but is properly applicable to a caucus of the National Legislature only, and is therefore too narrow. When it is used here in quotation it will have essentially the same meaning as that which I have given to the other term, and should be so understood. On the other hand the Legislative Caucus with which this paper has to do and which is concerned with nominations only, must be carefully distinguished from the Legislative Caucus of the present day which is concerned with legislation only. They are not the same though they have a common origin.

I.

THE FIRST TWO ELECTIONS.

During this period the constitution worked well. No nominations were made, and the electors exercised their

functions according to the spirit of the law. The reason is obvious. All men were agreed; and what indeed could be the advantage of pledges and nominations so long as there was no alternative? Washington by his services had nominated himself and all men were in gratitude pledged to him from the beginning of the constitution.

All men were not agreed however as to who should be vice-president. The north had a candidate and doubtless the south had one also. Electors were left free, nevertheless, to choose as they would, just as the constitution had intended. But party lines were not closely drawn yet, and leaders were benevolently disposed to take an ideally impartial view of the new country's interests. The south, therefore, since it had furnished the chief magistrate generously forbore to urge the claims of its candidate for second place. It was more fitting that a northern man should be selected. Accordingly this was done, and the patriotic conscience was satisfied.

Thus the first period passed; and the constitutional method of electing a president seemed about to prove a most excellent one. And so it would but for one annoying circumstance, viz:- the habit men have of disagreeing on important subjects. Indeed parties were already forming. Men were gravitating towards their leaders. Irreconcilable theories of government were being expounded, and separating lines of state policy laid down. In short preparations were being made for inevitable party strife, and we perceive at once that the

following years form a transition period between two extremes--on the one hand the solemn seriousness of the first two elections; on the other the time of Legislative Caucuses and pledged electors.

II.

FIRST TRANSITIONAL PERIOD.

The transitional period was tentative. Men were well disposed towards the new constitution but it was not a fetish, and party interest was already strong. The uncertainty which prevailed when electors were free was intolerable, and the question was how to ignore the constitution without drawing upon themselves the odium of unconstitutionality. It was thought the letter of the law might be followed without saying anything of the spirit. In other words, as Mr. O'Neil puts it,(1) "The organizers of the campaign could not afford to allow any electors to be chosen without a pledge.----The safest way of securing certainty was the nomination of pledged lists of electors." So lists of electors were prepared and hand bills were circulated saying that these electors would all vote for a certain man for president. This custom was not universal but a beginning was made; and in Pennsylvania at least, the plan was followed both by the Federalists and by

(1) O'Neil. The Electoral System, p. 56.

the Republicans.[1] Thus at the first real contest the constitution broke down at this one point, and the practice of depriving the electors of their independent power was instituted.

But if electors were to be pledged it was well, indeed it was indispensable to party unity, not only that all pledges should be confined to the party, but also that they should be concentrated on one man within the party. The philosophers say, "What is is necessary;" but in the realm of politics what is necessary <u>is</u>. And no sooner had the necessity of unity in pledging electors arisen than the machine for dictating the man to receive the pledges, was put in motion.

In 1796 the first steps were taken in that direction. We are told that the friends of Adams outside of Congress agreed among themselves to support him; and later an informal meeting of his opponents in Congress resulted in the determination to support Jefferson and Burr equally.[2] The moving cause of this action of the Republicans (as I suppose we may now call them) was, according to Lawton[3] the need, from their point of view, of "concentrating all the opposition to Adams."

(1) O'Neil. Electoral System, p. 56.

(2) Lalor. I-355.

(3) Caucus System, p. 76.

It is difficult to say just what took place in 1800. There is little or no doubt that meetings were held and candidates agreed upon, but the profound secrecy which surrounded them makes it almost, if not quite, impossible to state definitely what they did and what was the character of their actions. It seems that the Federalists were, at this time, developing a system of secret or private caucases whose action was not limited to nominations. The chief source of information is the Philadelphia Aurora, a radical Republican paper, whose statements from that very fact, must be cautiously accepted. I cannot better exhibit the character of the supposed Federal caucuses than by quoting a number of statements made at different times by the Aurora.

1. Feb. 17, 1800.

"Saturday, Feb. 15. Several inquiries have been made at the Aurora office to know what is the nature and purpose of the caucuses or secret meetings which have been held a few evenings past in the Senate chamber.---We are not in the secret this time but we---suspect there are three objects on the tapis.

1st. Measures of intrigues, influence and reconciliation concerning the election of president.

2nd. Plans for increasing the influence of the Federal and diminishing that of the State Legislatures.

3rd. Plans for managing the alterations proposed to be made in the judiciary code as hinted at in the president's message."

2. Feb. 18, 1800.

"We now state it as a fact that cannot be disputed on fair grounds that the bill we this day present (1) was considered at the caucus on Wednesday evening last."

3. March 3, 1800.

"The Caucus. On Saturday evening last (2) those gentlemen who heretofore met at the Senate chamber held a meeting or caucus at a private lodging house of one of the members of the party. We had not time to go in search of this subject but it was suspected to have been held to consider what was best to be done with that dangerously active fellow the Editor of the Aurora."

4. March 6, 1800.

"The caucus of Saturday evening (3) was not as numerously attended as might have been expected; nor did they sit as long as usual. There was some thunder for a moment or two but it but it had no other effect than to make the slender osier of Connecticut shake."

5. March 14, 1800.

"The Federalists do not all agree on the propriety of offering Timothy Pickering for the Presidency."

(1) A bill prescribing the change to be made in the method of deciding disputed elections of president.

(2) March 1.

(3) Ibid.

6. March 31, 1800.

"The caucuses are now carried on more cautiously than heretofore - - - they now assume the character of tea and card parties."

7. April 24, 1800.

"Another Caucus. A meeting of a hetrogenous cast consisting of elective officers, senators and representatives was held on Sunday last.(1) - - - We learn - - - that a very serious alarm prevailed among the thorough going men on account of some differences in the Cabinet."

8. May 16, 1800.

"Caucuses were held Tuesday and Wednesday evenings(2) at the lodgings of Mr. Jacob Read - - - at which Timothy Pickering and Gouveneur Morris were the most prominent characters."

Speaking of the same meeting the Aurora of May 22 says: "Upon the whole it was agreed that C. C. Pinckney and T. Pickering should be the candidates, and that they should be run to the utmost, taking the chance of every exertion to determine which should be President, and in this determination they parted."

These caucuses were, according to the Aurora,(3) "in the perfect spirit of a Jacobinical Conclave;" the resort indeed

(1) April 20. (2) May 13 and 14.

(3) Feb. 18, 1800.

of a set of scoundrels, and on the whole a disgrace to a free people.(1) On the other hand the Philadelphia Gazette, a Federalist paper, denies that any such meetings were being held by the Federalists. The editor is genial about it, however, and qualifies the statements of the Aurora as follows:(2)

"Jasper threatens the public with a fresh discharge from his political blunderbuss. The charge "in reserve" is another huge tale of caucuses about which the Aurora lies so most eloquently! Fire away, Jasper!"

Alexander Johnston says that the Federalists met in February and agreed to support Adams and Pinckney equally.(3) Hildreth agrees with this but does not mention any date.(4) I do not find these statements supported by either the Aurora or the Gazette---the two principal papers published at the seat of government at that time---though I have carefully examined both of them through the spring of 1800. These two statements of Mr. Johnston and Mr. Hildreth, together with those of the Aurora of May 16 and 22,(5) are the only authorities on the matter, so far as I know, and the information thus gained is unsatisfactory to say the least. The most that

(1) This attitude of the Aurora is of importance when we come to consider the evidence for the Republican Caucus.

(2) May 28, 1800.

(3) Lalor. Article Congressional Caucus.

(4) Hildreth. United States, Vol. 5. p. 357. (5) See Ante.

can be said from the sources I have at hand, is that the Federalists nominated candidates (probably Adams and Pinckney) in a private caucus some time during the spring of 1800.

All the authorities, except those at first hand, agree in saying that a Republican Caucus was held in the spring of 1800 and that Jefferson and Burr were designated by it as the candidates to be supported. They disagree as to the date, however. Stanwood thinks it was probably held in February or March.(1) Schouler, Hildreth and some others give no date at all, though they state that such a caucus was held. But the newspapers of the time make no mention, so far as I know, of any Republican caucus whatever. It will be remembered, too, that the Aurora severely criticises the Federal caucuses which it claims were being held at this time. This it could not in consistency do, if the Republicans themselves were also holding caucuses. At least, in such an event we cannot doubt that the Federalist papers would have made great capital out of whatever Republican meetings were known to them. But as I have said neither the Republican nor Federalist papers mention the existence of any such meetings. Obviously therefore we are forced to one of two conclusions; either no caucus was held, or, if one was held nothing was then known about it by any one who was willing to disclose the secret. Difficult as it is to accept this latter conclusion, it is almost impossible

(1) History of Presidential Elections, page 32.

to do otherwise in face of the following evidence which strongly supports such a theory.

The Daily National Intelligence of Feb. 23, 1824, gives us this bit of information:

"In May, 1800, Thomas Jefferson and Aaron Burr were selected at a caucus of Democratic (1) members of Congress held in Philadelphia. Thirty seven Representatives and a Senator attended the caucus. This was the first Congressional Caucus for the purpose of nominating party candidates for the office of President and Vice President." (2)

The Providence Patriot of February 28, 1824 agrees as follows:

"In May, 1800, Thomas Jefferson and Aaron Burr were selected at a caucus of Democratic members of Congress held in Philadelphia."

At about the same time Niles in a History of the Caucus, says: (3)

"An account of the meeting of 1800 never was officially published, though the names of some who attended it have recently been made known. If correctly given 43 Republican

(1) I have used the word Republican to designate the party of Jefferson and his successors until the time of Jackson. In quotation the word Democrat will be used quite as often as the others. (2) Quoted from the Democratic Press.

(3) 27 Niles, p. 66.

members of congress were present, and I believe also that many distinguished citizens who were not members attended it. It is said to have been held in Marache's Boarding House in Philadelphia. The object was only to have an understanding as to the Vice Presidency."

When we remember that these three accounts, which agree in saying that the caucus was held in May and which are the only accounts attaching the date to it at all, were all made at about the same time,(1) Mr. Niles positive statement that the account of the meeting never was officially published and that the names of some who attended it had only recently been made known, goes far towards explaining the silence of contemporary authorities. It is quite evident that the fact of such a meeting was not generally known at this time; it is quite possible that the secret was not disclosed until 1824.

This caucus is often called the first of the series of caucuses. I prefer to class it in what I have called the transitional period, because the caucuses of this period, so far as they can be called caucuses, were characterized by secrecy, by not being limited to members of congress nor occupied exclusively with nominations; and the Republican caucus of 1800 partook of at least one and possibly more of these characteristics.

(1) 1824.

III.

THE LEGISLATIVE CAUCUS.

a. NATIONAL CAUCUSES FROM 1804-1824.

In 1804 the first open and well organized Legislative Caucus was held, with the single object in view of nominating candidates for the presidency and vice presidency of the United States. It met on the 25th day of February.(1) One hundred and ten Republican members of Congress attended. Stephen Roe Bradley was made chairman and "a very able discussion of the importance of selecting the most proper characters"(2) was entered into. Thomas Jefferson was then chosen unanimously as the candidate for the presidency, and after balloting it was found that George Clinton had the majority of votes for the vice presidency. "A respectable committee consisting of members from each of the states was appointed to make proper arrangements."(3)

The caucus was critized by Republicans on the ground that it did not fairly represent the party. That is to say,

(1) Alexander Johnston in Lalor's Cyclopedia gives the date as the 29th of February. This is a mistake. It was reported on the 22th, but was held on the 25th. See National Intelligencer, February 29, 1804.

(2) National Intelligencer, February 29, 1804.

(3) National Intelligencer, February 29, 1804.

those districts which were not represented in Congress by a Republican were not represented in the caucus at all. The objection was one which was urged more or less strenously throughout the whole caucus period. Naturally as the Federalist party dwindled away it became less and less a[4] propos; but it was regularly urged and no attempt was made to meet it. In state politics, however, it was met by resorting to the mixed Legislative Caucus. That is, those districts represented in the State Legislatures by Federalists were allowed to send delegates to the Republican caucuses, and vica versa for the Federal caucuses. This simple device, as I have said, was never adopted by the managers of the National Legislative Caucus. Indeed in national politics it would not have been so simple, after all, at this early period, on account of the greater distance and lack of traveling facilities - - - a fact which gives us a key to the long continuance of the caucus in face of severe criticism and quite general disapprobation.

This was not, however, the only ground of opposition in 1804. The following is a sample of the popular complaint which immediately arose and continued to increase with every caucus:(1)

"Congress Electioneering for the People! We have received by the last southern mails a specimen of "equal and exact

(1) Massachusetts Spy. March 14, 1804.

justice" adopted by the modest Republican members of Congress ---in order to secure the election of their favorite candidates - - - -; we shall make no comments but leave our readers to their own reflections - - we wish them only to remember that such things are not only countenanced but are patronized by Jeffferson himself. '0 Shame, where is thy blush!'"

The Federalists as a national party made no nominations. "Their action," says Alexander Johnston, "was governed by a knot of leaders who had determined to effect a coalition between New England Federalists and the Middle State Democrats who were tired of Virginia domination."(1) The regular candidates were understood to be ~~Buckney~~ Pinckney and King;(2) but Aaron Burr, in the meantime, had come forward as an independent candidate and a caucus of the Federal members of the New York Legislature supported him by a large majority, in spite of the bitter opposition of Alexander Hamilton.

In 1808 the Legislative Caucus, in its own eyes at least, had become an authority on the presidential question. On the 19th of January, Senator Bradley, who, it will be remembered, was made chairman of the meeting in 1804, issued the following circular to the Republican members of Congress.(3)

(1) Lalor. Article Legislative Caucus.

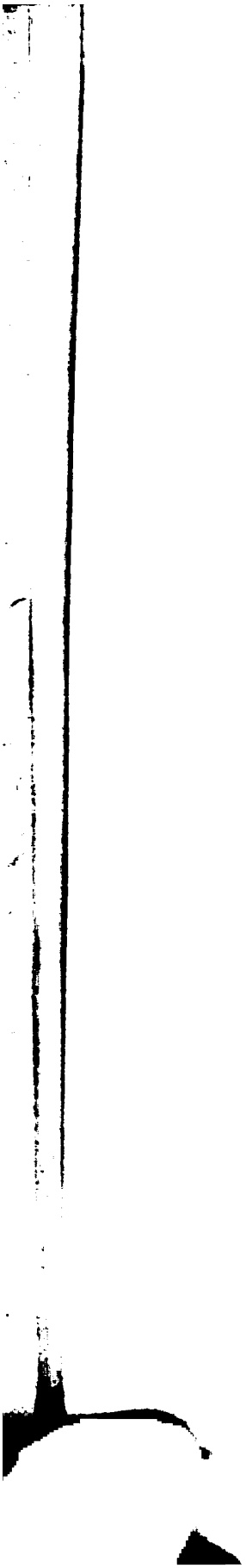
(2) 3 McMaster, 188.

(3) Niles Register, Vol. 25, p. 244.

"In pursuance of the powers vested in me as president of the late Convention for the Republican members of both houses of Congress, I deem it expedient for the purpose of nominating desirable characters for the president and vice president of the United States at the next presidential election, to call a convention of the said Republican members to meet at the senate chamber on Saturday, the 23 inst., at six o'clock, P.M., at which time and place your personal attendance is requested to aid the meeting with your influence, information and talents.

Dated at Washington this
19th day of January, 1808. Stephen Bradley."

This open assumption of authority, or at least the mandatory style in which the assumption was made, was resented by many good Republicans. Edwin Gray, a member of Congress, wrote a letter to Mr. Bradley criticising him severely. "I take the earliest moment," said Mr. Gray, "to declare my abhorrence of the usurpation of power declared to be vested in you ---of your mandatory style and the object contemplated. I deny that you possess any right to call upon the Republican members of Congress or other persons at this time and place to attend a caucus for the presidential election. You must permit me to remind you that it was for a far different purpose for which my constituents reposed their confidence in me. I cannot consent either in an individual or representative



capacity to countenance by my presence the midnight intrigues of any set of men who may arrogate to themselves the right (which belongs only to the people) of selecting proper persons to fulfil the important office of President and Vice President."(1)

Mr. Josiah Masters, though not so indignant as Mr. Gray, also entered his protest. It was less serious, certainly, but perhaps none the less effective. Members of Congress were astonished and amused shortly after the circular from Senator Bradley, to see the lobbies placarded with the following announcement:(2)

"In pursuance of similar powers vested in me with those assumed by Stephen Roe Bradley---I deem it expedient for the purpose of not nominating any characters for president or vice president----not to call a convention alias caucus to meet in the Senate Chamber on Saturday, the 23rd inst., at 6 o'clock, P. M., at which time and place the personal attendance of the said Republican members is not requested to aid the unconstitutional meeting solicited by the said Stephen Roe Bradley-----."

In spite of these remonstrances, however, the caucus met on the 23rd of January and nominated Madison and George Clinton. As if to answer some of the objections which

(1) Niles Register, [illegible]-244. (2) Niles Register, [illegible]-244.

had been made, or which they thought might be made to this procedure, a resolution was passed stating that they made their nomination only in their individual capacity. However this may be, in order to prevent others, who might also be acting in their individual capacities, from disregarding their own recommendations, a committee was appointed, as in 1804, to make all necessary "arrangements." Sixty two Republican members of Congress remained away from this caucus,[1] and later a protest was issued to the people of the United States against the nomination of Mr. Madison, denying the "authority" and "regularity" of the caucus which recommended him. John Randolph and other prominent men signed this protest.[2]

Two caucuses were held in Virginia on the 21st of January.[3] One hundred and thirty four members of the Legislature met and nominated Mr. Madison. They formed an electoral ticket and appointed corresponding committees. Fifty seven members, however, who refused to concur in this action, met in caucus on the same day, and agreed to support Mr. Monroe.

The Federalists again conducted the campaign without

(1) Boston Gazette, Feb. 4, 1808.

(2) Hildreth, Vol. VI. p. 65.

(3) National Intelligence Jan. 27 and Va. Argus Jan. 26, McMaster, III. 313, gives the date as the 19th of January.

resorting to a caucus. "They could not well make nominations," says Alexander Johnston,(1) while coquetting with Clinton and Monroe." Their candidates were Pinckney and King.

In peace men are all Democrats or Republicans; in war all Patriots or Traitors. In war the parties formed under conditions of peace are usually formed again for conditions of war, and neither party in peace exactly coincides with either party in war. In 1812 the Federalists were largely advocates of peace, the Republicans mostly supporters of war, but there were peace Republicans and war Federalists.

This re-forming of the parties, together with the great interests at stake, resulted in an almost incredible number of caucuses, mass meetings, and conventions. They may be conveniently treated under three heads, viz: 1. War Party. 2. Peace Party and 3. Independent Federalists.

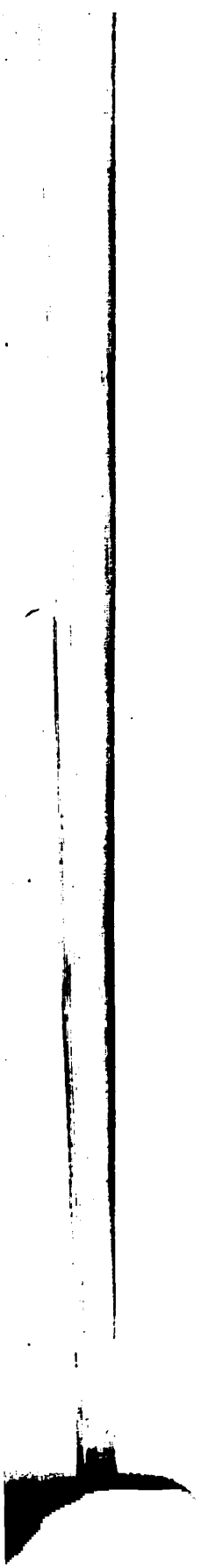
1. War Party. The regular caucus at Washington was controlled by the War Republicans who delayed the meeting until Mr. Madison had committed himself to a war policy. Of this caucus Mr. Stanwood makes this surprising statement:(2)

"The caucus was held on the 12th of May and it does not appear to have been openly objected to in any quarter."

In the first place, the caucus was held on the 18th and

(1) Lalor. I-356. See also McMaster III-317.

(2) History of Presidential Elections, p. 58.



not on the 12th of May.(1) In the second place he says it does not appear to have been openly objected to in any quarter. This, it seems to me is not at all the case. It is safe to say that, up to the present time, no caucus had been more severely or openly critised. Some samples of popular opinions will make this quite clear.

Boston Palladium, May 26.

"This caucus is considered by many, even Democrats, as against the spirit of that provision in the constitution which says no member of congress shall be appointed an elector of president. The Baltimore Whig has already come out against this caucus and so will the Star, Columbian, and Register of New York and probably the Aurora of Philadelphia, all Democratic papers. A state caucus is to be held on the subject at Albany, N. Y."

6 Boston Palladium

A Letter from Washington, D. C., May 29.

"You will see the result of the caucus by which (contrary to the letter and spirit of the constitution) a minority of the members of congress undertake to impose a President and Vice President upon the people of the United States.---Poor Gerry's hopes are frustrated.---Both he and little Tompkins

(2) See Alexandria Herald May 18th, 1812.
Salem Gazette " 26th "
Boston Patriot " 23rd "
Adams Hist. of the U. S. VI.-214.

will be suffered to pass down the stream of Time together.--- The same will hereafter be said of poor Madison.- - - -It must be confessed that the wisdom of the caucusites shone conspicuously in their selection of such men to fill the most important offices in these critical times. The best reason for their doing so is that given by Capt. O'Brien: "That Mr. Jefferson might sit at Monticello and stick a tiller into them and steer them where he pleased."

Salem Gazette, May 26.

"There are some who can recollect the old federal constitution made by Washington and his co-patriots, under which it was the practice for the people of each state through their electiors to choose the President and Vice President, but this labor saving machine of modern invention called a caucus, it must be confessed, is a great improvement taking a vast deal of trouble off the hands of the people and is an evidence of the superiority of modern patriots to those of the age of Washington. If the scene of political intrigue, bargaining of office, conciliatory promises and humiliating submissions which took place at the late presidential caucus- - -could be displayed before the eyes of the nation, what would be our indignation and melancholy foreboding."

Salem Gazette, May 29.

"Presidential Hard Scrabble."

Messrs. D. R. Williams, Cheves, and Lowndes, from South

Carolina and Mr. Macon from North Carolina, all Democrats, refused to attend the late meeting of members of Congress---on the ground that it was improper, inexpedient, indelicate, unconstitutional, and a monstrous usurpation of the rights of the people."

There are many such statements as these in the papers of the time. But not only was it opposed by men outside of Congress, even the Republican members themselves were by no means united in supporting it. Fifty one of the one hundred and thirty three members remained away.(1) Of these, some, as we know, were avowedly opposed to the caucus, and it is not unreasonable to suppose that many others were absent for similar reasons. If the attitude of the people toward this caucus was one of approval, where may we look for opposition?

Besides making the nominations, the caucus went through the old farce, as Hildreth says,(2) of resolving "that they made the nominations only in their individual character,---but they took a new step in advance by appointing a committee of correspondence and arrangements of one for each state to see that the nominations were duly respected." It is true the farce was enacted, as Mr. Hildreth says, and the committees also were not forgotten; but it must not be supposed that such a committee had never been appointed before. A similar

(1) 27 Niles 66.

(2) Hildreth Vol. VI. PP. 298-99.

committee was appointed in 1804[1] and also in 1808,[2] so that it was no anomaly at this late date.

A second caucus[3] was held by the Republicans on the 8th of June, to nominate a Vice President in place of John Langdon, who had resigned. Elbridge Gerry was selected and thus, after all, his hopes were not entirely frustrated.[4]

The regular caucus nomination was supported, at least as far as the nomination of Mr. Madison was concerned, by a number of meetings in various parts of the country. Earlier in the year the Virginia Legislature chose electors, who, though no candidate was named, it was known would vote for Madison. Pennsylvania followed the lead, but her Legislature went a step farther and nominated Madison and George Clinton.[5] Later in the year, in September, a Pittsburg meeting passed a series of resolutions declaring their entire approbation of the war, but also their firm belief that a change of administration was necessary. They chose DeWitt Clinton and

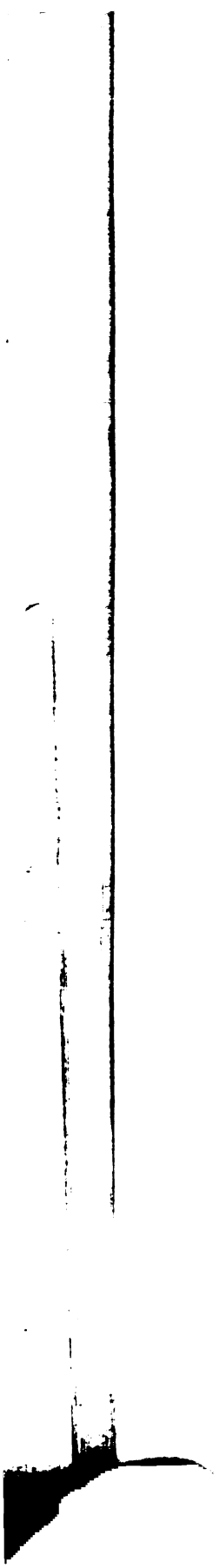
(1) National Intelligence, Feb. 29, 1804.

(2) Philadelphia Gazette, Feb. 1, 1808.

(3) Portland Argus, June 18.

(4) See Boston Palladium, May 29.

(5) 4 McMaster 191. George Clinton died before the Legislative Caucus met at Washington.



Elbridge Gerry.[1] And on the 5th of August a great mass meeting of fifteen hundred voters was held at Rockingham, New Hampshire, at which a full ticket was adopted and a vigorous address to Mr. Madison prepared.[2]

2. The Peace Ticket. The Peace Ticket originated in the breaking away of the New York Republicans from the authority of Virginia leadership. Ten days after the nomination of Madison,[3] the Republicans of the New York Legislature nominated De Witt Clinton without a dissenting vote.[4] Historians differ somewhat as to the motives for this action;[5] but the caucus itself appointed a committee especially to declare their reasons, and on the 17th of August a long address was issued.[6] The first part of the address is taken up with a consideration of the caucus. "The State of New York," says the committee, "has by an open nomination for the presidency entered its formal protest against the practice of Congressional caucuses." The address goes on, from this subject, to show the injustice of Virginia domination, as it was popularly called, and finally ends with a trenchant criticism of the

(1) Salem Gazette, Oct. 9, 1812. (2) Labor. Vol. III. 114

(3) 29th of May. (4) Connecticut Mirror, June 8th, 1812.

(5) See Schouler II-369. McMaster IV, 192. Hildreth VI, 375-6.

(6) 3 Niles, 17.

manner in which the war was being conducted. Such, according to the committee were the motives of the New York Republicans in nominating De Witt Clinton. It seems difficult to believe, however, that there was any strong opposition to the caucus as such, among the leaders of the movement. New York is the last place we should look to see opposition, by party leaders, to a system which tended to concentrate power in the hands of party leaders. There is something incongruous, too, in using a particular form of caucus to register a protest against the system in general. We do not expect a man to teach us his system of morals by practicing for us our system of immorality. It seems much more probable, that, whatever may have influenced the voters who supported Clinton, the leaders who nominated him, were mainly actuated by a jealousy of the influence of Virginia. The voters themselves, it is undoubtedly true, had various motives. Those who hated Madison or feared him; those who doubted his ability or his patriotism; those who desired a northern president; those who were vaguely dissatisfied or discontented - - - all, as Hildreth says, gravitated towards Clinton and Ingersoll. We see immediate evidence of it. County after county took up the name of Clinton; and before October State Conventions had been held in New Jersey, Rhode Island, Maine and New York, which supported his nomination. The Federalists themselves were disposed to follow his leadership. They also, in county

meetings, adopted Clinton as their candidate, and gradually the peace element in both parties came together in his support. It seemed to be taken for granted that he was in favor of peace, although the caucus committee had said very little about it in their address, and Clinton himself had said nothing whatever. However that may have been, the words "Peace Ticket" quickly became associated with his name, and since no protest was made, either by himself or his committee, we must conclude that he at least desired it to be understood that his views were of a pacific nature. The situation is well summed up in the Salem Gazette of October 13, showing clearly the various interests which the movement was attempting to conciliate and the uncertainty which such an attempt made necessary.

"The Case Stated. I.

Mr. Madison is the author of the War.

He is pledged to carry it on.

Notwithstanding the principal cause of war has ceased he takes no notice of it.

Notwithstanding he commenced the war he commenced it without preparation.

He conducts it feebly.

Thus far it has disgraced us.

He has no regard for our commercial interests.

II.

Mr Clinton is not the author of the war.

He is not pledged to carry it on.

He is believed to be favorable to hononable peace.

He has ability to conduct the war if necessary to be continued.

He was not bred in the political school of Virginia.

He is a friend of commercial protection.

A Federal president cannot be chosen.

The Federal and Republican friends of peace may probably elect Mr. Clinton.

The union is hononable, the object is great."

It may seem strange that the Federalists should have so unhesitatingly adopted as their candidate a Republican leader whose views were not certainly known to coincide with their own. Some understanding, secret or otherwise, between themselves and De Witt Clinton or his committee, on the question of the war, may seem almost a necessity in order to understand the party's attitude. This indeed is the next step; and it leads us to a consideration of the so-called Federalist National Convention of September, 1812.

In the article on Legislative Caucus in Lalor's Cyclopedia, Mr. Johnston says: "In September a secret convention of Federalists from all of the states north of the Potomac and from South Carolina met in New York city and after three days debate agreed to support Clinton for President and Jared Ingersoll for Vice President." This statement is, in

essential, made by most of the other secondary authorities. They all state the general indefinite facts, and omit to state the same definite important facts, viz:- the date of the convention and their authority for its existence. In attempting to learn something more definite about this meeting I have carefully examined the following papers from July to October, inclusive, for the year 1812;

Boston Centinel	Philadelphia Advertiser
" Palladium	New York Herald
" Messenger	Vermont Journal
" Patriot	Portland Argus
Salem Gazette	" Gazette
Worcester Spy	Portsmouth Oracle.

I have noted every piece of information so far as I was able, which mentioned or even suggested, however faintly, such a convention, and the following is the result:

1. "It is stated that at a meeting in the city of New York, of seventy delegates from the different states it was agreed to support the Hon. De Witt Clinton for the Presidency and Jared Ingersoll for the Vice Presidency."(1)

2. A New York meeting of the Friends of Peace passed among others the following resolution;(2) "That representatives be chosen in the several counties, discrete men, friends

(1) Boston Palladium Sept. 22, 1812.

(2) Salem Gazette Aug. 25, 1812.

of peace; these men can correspond or confer with each other and co-operate with the Friends of Peace in our sister states in devising and passing such constitutional measures as may secure our independence and preserve our Union, both of which are endangered by the present war."

3. "'A convocation of politic worms' from various parts of the country assembled in the city of New York a few days since and agreed to support the Hon. De Witt Clinton for President and Jared Ingersoll- - -for Vice President. We are informed that Mr. Otis of this town was present; that the august assemblage was made up of seventy persons, principally of those puissant patriots who have ludicrously dubbed themselves with the appelation of Peace Party."(1)

On the other hand, in the Boston Sentinel(2) I find the following; "While the Federalists throughout the Union, except in the state of Virginia(3) have studiously avoided the nomination of a candidate for the presidency from their own party, there seems to be among them a general assent to the project of supporting by their votes a rival to the present Chief Magistrate of the opposite party whose competition may probably be attended with success." And in the Boston Messenger(4)

(1) Boston Patriot, Sept. 23, 1812. (2) Oct. 28, 1812.

(3) Virginia's nomination of King was made on the 21st of September.

(4) Oct. 9, 1812.

the following: "No nomination of a president has been made by the Federalists." In addition to these Mr. McMaster, certainly not the least of the secondary authorities, says that the Federalists, true to their ancient custom, held no caucus and made no nomination.(1)

This is, so far as I can learn, the whole of the positive evidence on both sides. It is, however, the negative evidence, that is to say the quite general silence on the subject of such a convention, maintained by most of the papers referred to, which is difficult to explain. We are told that a great convention of delegates from a majority of the states, has been held by the party which it was popularly supposed was willing to break up the Union---a convention, the like for which had never before been held in the United States, and than which no meeting of greater popular interest or importance could well be imagined; and yet of twelve representative newspapers of both parties, only two notice the existence of a "meeting of seventy delegates from the different states," and one other hints most vaguely indeed, at the practicability of unity in party action! This it seems to me is most remarkable, and granting for the moment that such a convention as is reported to have been held, was held, let us ask two questions; first, was such general ignorance of the convention probable or possible? and second, if not, is such general

(1) 4 McMaster 192.

silence on the subject comprehensible?

Ignorance of the subject could have been possible, of course, only on the assumption that the Federalists desired the meeting to remain unknown outside of the party. The secondary authorities do, indeed, say that the meeting was a secret one---held with closed doors; but this is merely saying that the members desired to keep the debates and proceedings from the general public, and keeping the proceedings and debates a secret is an entirely different thing from keeping the existence of the meeting itself, a secret. Granting, however, that this could have been accomplished----that the meeting could have been kept a secret, what motives had the Federalists for doing so? It seems improbable they could have had any. Of what practical use indeed, could the meeting be unless its decisions were known, and in making its decisions known the fact of the meeting must also be made known. Again, the Federalists were holding meetings all over the north---county and state conventions---and these were as little secret as possible; they were heralded by every good Federalist as events to be known as widely as possible. Every demonstration, it was felt, added to the number of "Friends of Peace," and the more who knew of them the better. Why then should they have desired to keep the very existence of this National Convention, before and after its occurrence, such a profound secret?

But, had they wished to do so, was it possible? In order

to be a convention of delegates, the delegates, few in number as they were, must have been appointed by the states. We may suppose this was done by the Federalists in the legislatures or by state conventions of some sort, for it could hardly be done otherwise if anything is meant by the word delegate. Now we must remember, in this connection, that the Federalists were looked upon by the Republicans as traitors. Every move they made, every convention they held, was reported and its significance as a movement towards ~~dominion~~ dissunion, exaggerated. Indeed, they were carefully watched at every step,---so carefully that it seems quite ~~improbable~~ impossible to suppose that the project of a national meeting could have been agreed on; that meetings of the Federalists in the Legislat~~ive~~ures or State Conventions of any kind, could have been held and delegates appointed, in eleven northern states, and that these delegates could have met in New York for three days---all with such profound secrecy that almost our only information on the subject comes from a leading Federalist paper, which knew nothing of it until afterwards and then only by hearsay! And why, indeed, do we find a leading Federalist paper making any mention of the convention at all, if the Federalists were attempting to keep the meeting a secret?

Thus, in answer to our first question, viz: Was such general ignorance of this convention,--granting that it was held---probable or possible?, we may certainly say it was not probable, and while to say it was not possible, is, doubtless

too strong, yet the evidence is such as almost to justify such a statement.

The second question, viz., if such general ignorance was not probable or possible is such silence on the subject, comprehensible?---is readily answered. We cannot suppose, that, had the project of the convention been known, it would not have been reported in every Republican paper from Maine to Georgia; it is impossible to believe they should have wasted columns upon unimportant county and town meetings, and given never a word to this most important of all. To state the question is to answer it; and if we conclude that ignorance of such a meeting was impossible, then, in view of the general silence on the subject, we must conclude, it seems to me, that such a convention was not held.

And, now, granting this for the moment---that such a convention was not held---it is not difficult to see how the report of one might easily have been started. It is, in any event, not entirely false. There is in it all a bit of truth from which the story grew. There was, it appears, a meeting about this time, of some few leaders of the Federal party in New York city---a kind of informal caucus---the purpose of which was, doubtless, to secure harmony of action and to ascertain, in a personal interview if possible, the actual views of Clinton on the subject of the war. An extract from the Boston Centinel[1] will throw light on this subject:

(1) Oct. 21, 1812.

"New York Coalition.

It has been stated in most of the public prints that a great caucus has been held in New York composed of many distinguished gentlemen of the Federal party. We now learn that - - -the resolutions taken of most importance were;

1st. That under present circumstances it would be unwise to take up with a man notoriously of their own party.

2nd. That they should support the candidate of the two already in nomination whose success would best promote the interests of the party.

3rd. That they would not now make a selection of either as their candidate.

In the incidental discussion to which these points gave occasion, Messrs. Otis, Gouverneur Morris and we believe R. Goodloe Harper gave a decided preference for Mr. Clinton, and a meeting between that gentleman and a certain member of the caucus - - - was held and in this meeting Mr. Clinton declared that all political connection between himself and the Democratic party in the United States had ceased and would not again be renewed. This fact can be established in a court of Law if necessary."

This account is quoted from the National Intelligencer. Many papers copied it and its circulation was quite general,

although the truth of the report was denied.(1) But the fact remains--- the important fact--that the meeting was actually held and the above account of it, true or false, was current. Now add to all this the fact that on the 17th and 18th of September---just about the time of the supposed National Convention---a state convention of delegates "from the various counties of New York" nominated Clinton and Jared Ingersoll--the candidates said to have been selected by the National Convention---and we have quite sufficient material to explain all the statements upon which the actuality of a Federal National Convention must be based.

In one word the theory here presented, is that the so-called National Convention of "Delegates from the various States;" and the "Great Caucus" of "distinguished gentlemen of the Federal Party" are one and the same thing in reality

(1) Mr. Otis in a note to the Public says that although he was present at the meeting, the National Intelligence account of it is entirely false. No such committee, he says, was appointed. He knew of no interview with Mr. Clinton, and had never seen him except once in a Court of Justice. - - - Other denials of a similar nature were published, but the fact of the meeting was not denied.

and that the meeting was not properly a convention at all, but simply an informal gathering of self appointed leaders, for the purpose of considering prominent political questions and of learning something definite, if possible, of the attitude of De Witt Clinton towards the Federal party.(1)Note. I do not wish to be understood as claiming that this theory is inevitably, or even undoubtedly, the correct one, but it is, at least, not an improbable one. Naturally, however, any definite or satisfactory decision must rest with those who have access to more complete sources of information than those at my disposal.

3. The third head under which I started out to discuss the nominations for the election of 1812 is that of the Independent Federalists. It is merely for convenience that this name has been given to that branch of the Federal Party which refused to support Clinton and Ingersoll. It was at best, so they thought, a compromise with the enemy; and a compromise too, in which the enemy were as likely as not to get the best of the bargain. It was better to be true to their old principles for the sake of the principles, than to more than half renounce them for the merest chance of gaining a momentary advantage. The movement was organized in Virginia, and for

(1) Note. This conclusion is strongly supported by McMaster IV. p. 200--a statement I have just seen.

the most part was confined to that state. On the 21st of September, a convention of delegates from eighteen of the counties met at Winchester.(1) Very little seems to have been reported about this meeting; save that it resulted in the nomination of Rufus King for the presidency and General Davis of North Carolina for the vice presidency. Which of the counties sent delegates, or how the delegates were appointed, or what their powers were, I have no knowledge. But the method of procedure was doubtless similar to that in the northern states, where the delegates were elected by county mass meetings. Little or no organization had been developed; and the state conventions themselves, at this period, it is likely were more of the character of mass meetings than of modern conventions.

In 1816 the Legislative Caucus reached the height of its power; a majority of eleven successfully dictated the candidates. It must not be forgotten, however, that its power consisted mainly in doing what the party majority wished to have done; and its dictation would hardly have been successful had not a majority of the party been in favor of the man dictated. As Mr. Stanwood says, people were startled, not so much at

(1) McMaster IV. p. 196 reports a Virginia convention of "Eighteen counties" held at Stanton. No date is given.

what was done as at what might have been done so easily--- startled because the caucus came so near making recommendations which would not have been accepted.(1)

The meeting was called to meet on the 12th of March; but only about fifty eight members attended. According to the Boston Sentinel(2) this was due to some irregularity in the call, on account of which the "speaking trumpet of the palace sounded an interdiction of the attendance of all who expect to find grace or favor at court, and of course the meeting was not full." It was moved to adjourn till the 16th in order to secure a more representative attendance. Meanwhile "all the arts of the palace and public office---all the back stairs influences are in full exercise to perpetuate the succession of the illustrious house of Virginia."(3) On the 16th accordingly the caucus met and the perpetuation of the illustrious house of Virginia was secured. One hundred and eighteen members were present, and one or two delegates from the territories, who, however, did not vote.

The most interesting feature of the meeting was the introduction of two resolutions---one by Mr. Clay and one by Mr. Taylor of New York.(4) Of these resolutions Mr. McMaster says:

(1) Presidential Elections, p. 66.

(2) March 20, 1816.

(3) Boston Sentinel, March 20. (4) 4 McMaster, 364.

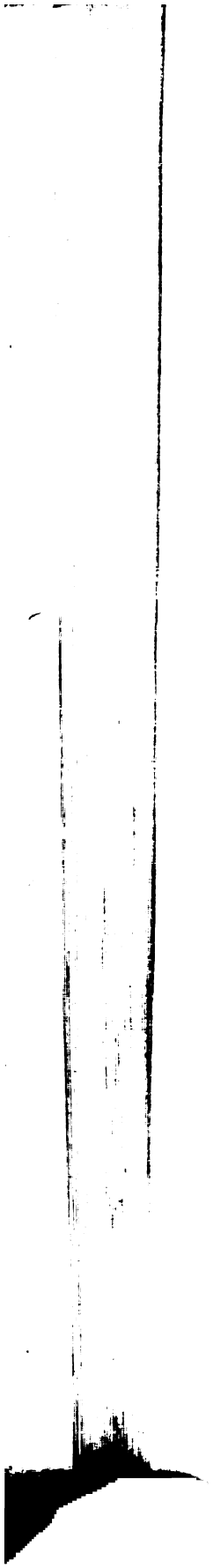
"The question first to be considered was whether or not a nomination should be made. To decide it Clay moved that it was not expedient to make any recommendation. On the vote being taken it was found that the nays had it. A New York member then moved that the practice of naming candidates---by members of Congress was expedient and ought to be continued. This passed." This does not agree with the report of the caucus by the National Intelligencer as given by Niles[1] and as copied by most of the papers of the time. According to this report, "Mr. Clay then submitted the following resolution, "Resolved that it is inexpedient to make in caucus any recommendation- - -of persons - - - to fill the offices of president and vice president," and the questions being taken thereon it was decided in the negative. Mr. Taylor of New York then submitted the following resolution, to-wit: "Resolved that the practice of nominating candidates for the office of president and vice president of the United States by a convention of the Senators and Representatives in Congress is inexpedient and ought not to be continued," and the question being taken thereon it was also decided in the negative."

These two reports of Mr. Taylor's resolution are thus directly opposed to each other. The National Intelligencer is the main source of information on the caucus in general; and

(1) 10 Niles 59.

if Mr. McMaster had sufficient from other sources to qualify his statement it seems strange that he should have refrained from calling attention to the mistakes of the National Intelligencer and the various secondary authorities which have taken its report as the correct one. Again, it is clear, that Mr. Taylor's resolution was generally supposed at the time to have been substantially the same as that of Mr. Clay; for as I have said, the National Intelligencer's account of the caucus was widely copied. In the Western Monitor, also, of April 12, 1816, I find the following corroborative statements: "It would appear from the motions of Mr. Clay and Mr. Taylor that they were both convinced of the gross impropriety of such nominations." (Freeman's Journal). "I cannot help thinking that had they adopted the resolution introduced by Mr. Clay or that submitted by Mr. Taylor they would both have deserved the thanks of the nation." (Scotia Gazette).

Now had Mr. Taylor really introduced the resolution credited to him by Mr. McMaster, we may suppose that, in view of the quite general popular misapprehension, he would have made some effort to correct the error, but there is no evidence of such an attempt, so far as I know; and, I may say, I have taken some pains to secure such evidence. Of course, the question naturally arises, why after one resolution had been introduced against the caucus and had been voted down, should a second exactly like it be introduced? But this is



well answered by asking why after a resolution against the caucus had been introduced and voted down, should a second exactly opposite to it be introduced? For so surely as the first was voted down, just so surely would the second be voted up. A second resolution, therefore, either for or against the caucus, seems entirely superfluous and the only question to be determined is, as before, how did Mr. Taylor word his ~~supposed~~ superfluous resolution?

These resolutions are of importance as they seem to indicate that it had become, at least impolitic, even for the caucus itself, to longer ignore the growing opposition to the system. A number of Republican leaders remained away, avowedly because they objected to nominations being made in this way; and the popular opposition as expressed in the newspapers was certainly as pronounced as it had ever been. A correspondent to the New York Evening Post incidentially makes the following remarks:(1) "The caucus is over, the business is settled. One hundred and nineteen sovereigns assembled last evening and gave the empire to Col. Monroe. Well, we must make the best of it. Our state---the great state of New York---is bought and sold like ~~meat~~ beef just as best suits the views and projects of the patriotic rulers of the day." The Washington Gazette,(2) a Republican paper thinks

(1) See Albany Advertiser, March 28.

(2) See Massachusetts Spy, March 27.

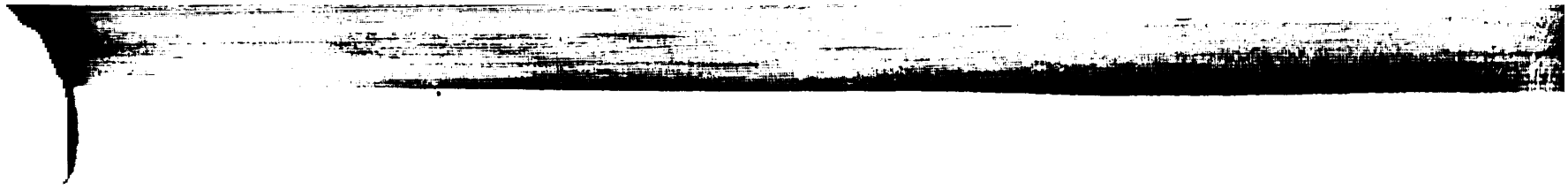
that "The nomination of a successor by the president converts this elective republican government into a hereditary monarchy. If we are to have Royalty let it not be masked." "The Machine" says the New York Herald,(1) "has been put in motion with complete success and Monroe and Tompkins have been turned out of the hopper in style. Who will longer hesitate to subscribe to the truth of the poet's line "The post of honor is a private station."

It is during this campaign that the project of a National Convention is put forward for the first time. Aaron Burr made a proposition for some kind of a National Convention to nominate Andrew Jackson, saying that "if it could be made respectable his success would be inevitable."(2) and we are also told that "as early as 1816 Matthew Carey in his Olive Branch exposed the dangers of the caucus system and advocated a National Convention."(3)

The Federalists, so active in 1812, had apparently become too resigned to their defeat, to make any positive effort in 1816. They settled back, therefore, into a quiet passivity and voted, probably from force of habit, for Rufus King, who seems to have had the honor of being the most faithfully defeated man of his time.

The story of the caucus of 1820 is soon told. The

(1) See Massachusetts Spy, March 27. (2) Lalor I. p. 359. (3) Miller. Nominating Conventions in Pennsylvania.



call,[1] by Mr. Smith, is a model of meekness, and the "mandatory style" complained of in 1808 has entirely disappeared. On the evening of the 8th of April a few members assembled only to resolve "that this meeting deem it not necessary to proceed to the recommendation of suitable persons to fill the office of President and Vice President - - - Resolved, that this meeting be adjourned sine die."[2]

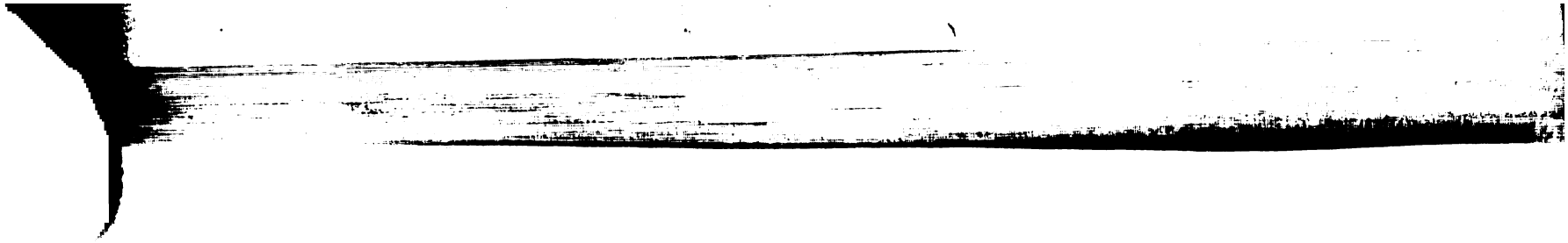
Naturally no great opposition to this caucus was shown; not because men were becoming reconciled to the caucus but because the power of the caucus was, apparently, so decidedly on the wane that opposition was unnecessary. Mr. Niles[3] was sorry to see "the awkward work naturalized by a Demi-semi official publication of a member of Congress. - - -When nominations are necessary - - - it is to be hoped that they will not be made by members of Congress. Let them, like Caesar's wife, be not only pure but unsuspected."

Jefferson's "fire bell in the night" aroused many people from their slumbers and quickly called a new party to the scene of action. A large meeting was held in Philadelphia on the 21st of October; an anti-slavery ticket was agreed to and a committee of arrangements was appointed to promote its success. Their candidate, we are told,[4] was De Witt Clinton;

(1) National Intelligence, April 6, 1820.

(2) 18 Niles, 113. (3) Ibid.

(4) 4 McMaster 517.



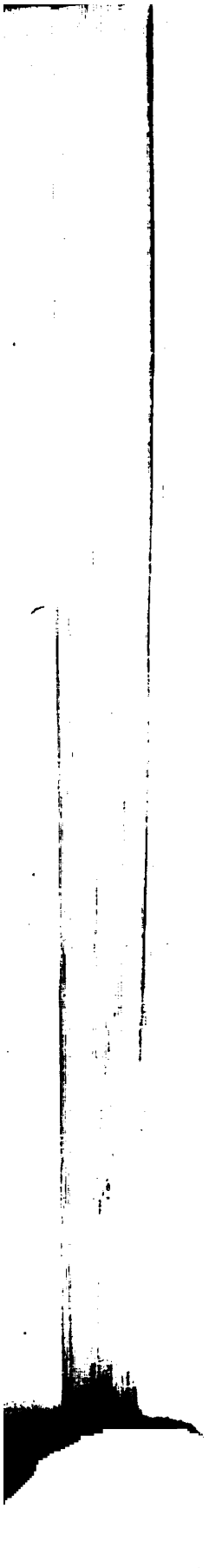
and thus equipped the Anti-Slavery party first enter the field, a protest against the policy of compromise.

The era of good feeling vanished before the presidential struggle of 1824. It was a struggle not between parties but between factions. All men were Republicans but there were Republicans and Republicans. Five men aspired to succeed Monroe---Crawford, Adams, Clay, Calhoun, and Jackson. The first represented the old regime and favored the caucus; the last standing for the new order, Democracy, was the candidate of the People. The struggle, naturally, began early, and all factions opposed the caucus except the one which expected to control it. The significant point, however, is the ease with which politicians broke away from the regular caucus---the eagerness with which they assumed the initiative, as soon as it became impossible for the caucus nominations to satisfy more than a small number of the party.

The first recommendation was made by South Carolina. The Legislature of that state, on the 18th of December, 1821, named William Lowndes.(1) Tennessee followed by nominating Jackson on the 27th of July, 1822.(2) Other nominations were made. No less than twelve states made recommendations prior to the National Caucus in 1824. State Conventions were held

(1) Daily National Intelligence, Jan. 10, 1822.

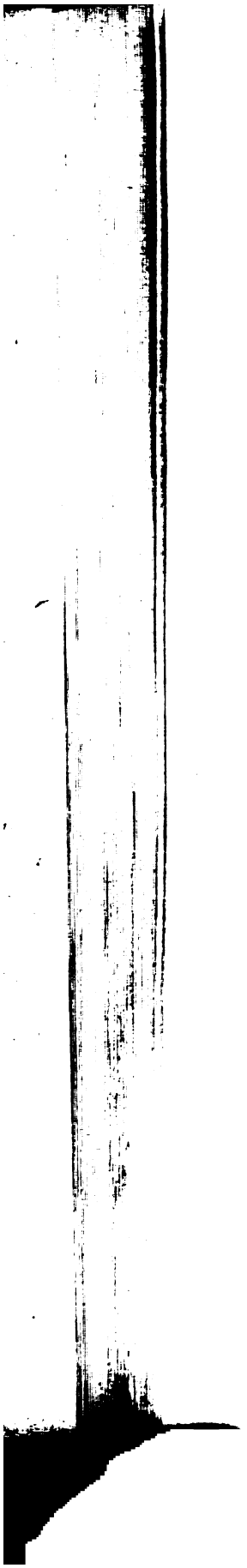
(2) Richmond Enquirer, August 16, 1822.



in Rhode Island and Pennsylvania; great numbers of county and district conventions met in all parts of the county, to appoint committees, pass resolutions, and nominate favorite candidates.

Meanwhile denunciations of the caucus system filled the land. The subject was never dropped. Meetings of every sort passed resolutions in opposition to it, and newspapers continued to fill spare columns with squibs and rude rhymes holding it up to popular ridicule. Every note was sounded from argument to prejudice. Patriotism was appealed to; indignation of a constitutional sort was freely expressed--- every devise, in short, was used to force the Legislative Caucus into disfavor. Very few new arguments were advanced. In 1823 the legislature of Tennessee passed resolutions opposing the caucus and sent them to the various states, asking co-operation in suppressing it. It was urged that the caucus did not justly represent the states. Virginia, for example, would have twenty four votes for twenty four members of Congress, while Pennsylvania with twenty eight members of Congress would have only twenty one votes in the caucus.(1) Niles laid great stress on the difference between working for men and ~~masses~~ measures. "When men and not ~~masses~~ measures are the consideration" he says, "Pandemonium itself cannot present a more perfect picture of depravity than a caucus presents."(2)

(1) 25 Niles 225. (2) 21 Niles 338.



Pennsylvania in convention said: "If a link in this chain of successive secretary Dynastics be not broken now, then may we be fettered by it forever. Andrew Jackson ~~came~~ comes pure, untrammeled and unpledged from the people."(1) The friends of Clay at Washington on the 29th of January held a meeting at which they pledged themselves not to attend a caucus. Jackson's papers, we are told, ridiculed

"The shallow Knaves with forms to
mock us,
Struggling one by one to
caucus."(2)

Rufus King said members were attending to presidents making rather than to their duties.(3) And Mr. Niles assures us that, although there is more political intrigue now existing in the United States than there ever was before, yet he is too old to mistake the chirpings of Tom-tit politicians for the majestic voice of the people;(4) the majestic voice of the people, indeed, is decidedly against the caucus; opposition is general, and the late attempt at a Philadelphia meeting to defeat the anti-caucus resolution apparently had no more chance of success than the British would have met with in the last war if they had brought out their brigs of a peculiar construction to sail up the Niagra Falls.(5)

(1) 26 Niles, 40. (2) Shepard's Van Buren, p. 102.
(3) Ibid, p. 89. (4) 24 Niles, 324. (5) 25 Niles, 258.

But in spite of opposition, or because of it, the friends of Crawford,--the Tom-tit politicians---decided to hold a caucus. They, on their part, appealed to tradition; they appealed to party pride; they appealed to the necessity of unified action "against the adversary." But there was no "adversary" outside of the party to unite against; and it was just because within the parties they were all adversaries, that to attempt to unite in caucus was useless in any event. But they overrated the influence of custom. They imagined that, when it came to the test, a general dissent from the "regular" nomination would be impossible. So the caucus was held.

On the 14th of February, 1824, sixty six members of congress assembled and recommended Crawford almost unanimously. The following gives the location of the men who attended the caucus.(1)

Maine	2	Virginia	15
Rhode Island	1	North Carolina	9
Connecticut	3	South Carolina	2
New York	16	Georgia	8
New Jersey	1	Ohio	1
Pennsylvania	3	Indiana	1
Maryland	3	Illinois	1

(1) 25 Niles, 392.

They declared that they were acting only in their individual capacity;[1] and the chairman, Mr. Ruggles, made a speech full of reference to a glorious past and despondency for a "dismembered future."[2] This was the last Legislative Caucus in National politics. It not only had less influence than its advocates had hoped; it had no influence whatever. It was a complete failure.

b. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE CAUCUS AND CAUSES OF ITS DOWNFALL.

Speaking of the downfall of the system Professor Von Holst says,[3] "A mere accident in 1824 broke down the barrier which had, since 1804, restricted the taking of the initiative in the matter of proposing presidential candidates, to Congress. W. H. Crawford was the designated candidate of a portion of the Democratic party when a stroke of paralysis made him a physical and mental ruin. - - - - The effort to make such a man the head of the nation decided his (i. e. "King Caucus") immediate and permanent downfall." The fall of the Caucus, according to Mr. Johnston, was due to the following causes.[4] "The Congressional Caucus received its death blow

(1) Niles complains that men acting in their individual capacities only, ought not to use public halls lighted and heated at public expense. (2) 25 Niles 388-399.

(3) Const. Hist. of the U. S. II. pp. 1-2.

(4) Lalor Article. Nominating Conventions.

in 1824, and the Legislative Caucus as a state nominating body perished about the same time. In both cases the reason was the same. The old politicians who had for years controlled the actions of the dominant party had too strong a hold on the party machinery to be resisted in the regular caucuses; and the new politicians, whom the rising Democratic spirit and the extension of the suffrage were together bringing to the front, preferred to try the issues with the old party leaders in some new forum." These were doubtless important considerations in the downfall of the caucus system, but it can hardly be said that they are the sole ones; they are occasions rather than causes of its fall. In trying to get at the significance of the caucus---which ought at the same time to put us in possession of the causes of its overthrow,---there are two facts of prime importance which force themselves upon our attention. 1st. It does not seem to have been a natural product of anything which had gone before; and 2nd, from the very beginning it existed only in the face of the most decided opposition.

By saying that it does not seem to have been the natural product of anything that had gone before, I do not mean that state caucuses were not common at the time of the first national caucus. They were. What I mean is, that the whole caucus system, state and national, does not seem to have been such a product. In some instances, no doubt, the caucus

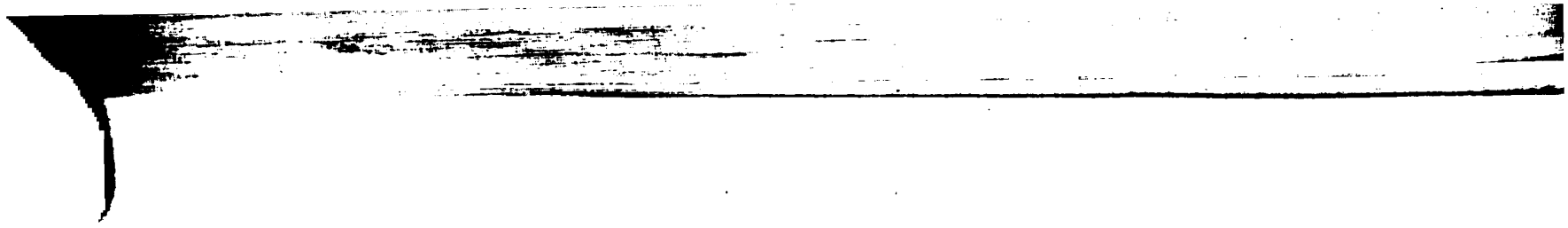
naturally grew out of the practice of self nomination;(1) but by the time of the first caucus the practice of self nomination had been, for the most part, superseded by the county and town mass meeting. That is to say, when the first legislative caucuses were held, the most common method of signifying preferences for a candidate was by county mass meetings; and, indeed, the first caucus nominations themselves, had to be ratified by such meetings. Now no one can reason from county mass meetings to Legislative caucuses. There is no connection. One would naturally reason from county mass meetings to county conventions, and from county conventions to state conventions and so on. Why, therefore, it is natural to ask, did not the nominating convention follow immediately upon the mass meeting as the natural outgrowth from it? Why does the caucus come in between these two practices, which seem logically related? Why, in short, do we find any such thing as the legislative caucus?

Simply because the caucus represented the line of least resistance. The convention was positive; the caucus negative. The convention was an institution to be established; the caucus was a practice to be allowed. To establish the nominating convention would have required a positive effort with a definite end in view. No one was willing to assume the

(1) See Appendix I.

responsibility of making such an effort. More than all else, the practical difficulties of holding a state convention even, to say nothing of a national convention, were, at this early period, very great. The cost and inconvenience of traveling was in itself so great an obstacle, that the necessity of making a nomination was hardly sufficient to overcome the difficulties of making it. In short, if the convention was to be used it not only had to be accepted, it had also to be adopted; a positive effort had to be made. The caucus, on the other hand, needed only to be accepted; it established itself. No positive effort, no definite end in view, was required. Leaders of a party, already assembled in one place, come together to consider the situation. Concentration is necessary. One man is prominent above all others. They easily agree that he is the man to be supported; they pledge themselves to support him. The assent of the party seems to give a color of authority to their action; it is repeated, and thus the caucus developes. No machinery, nothing positive, nothing definite. It establishes itself, and is accepted, not because it is better, or more popular, not because it grew out of previous conditions, but because, for the most part, it came easily and was better than nothing if not the best that could be had.

And for this very reason the overthrow of the system was, sooner or later, certain. Existing on ~~suffrage~~ suffrance it must



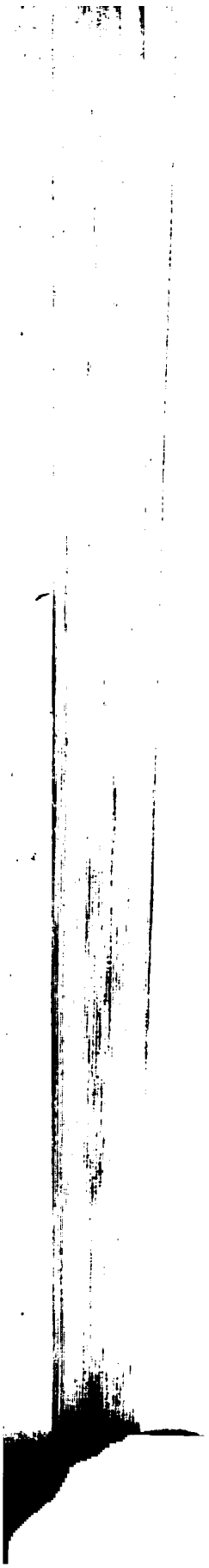
necessarily go as soon as it became intolerable, or something better became possible. By 1824 the caucus had, pretty generally, become intolerable, and the nominating convention was becoming practicable. It needed only an occasion for the abolishment of the former, and the establishment of the latter would soon follow. Irreconcilable division in the party furnished the occasion for the one; the other came in, not alone indeed, on the great wave of western democracy which placed Andrew Jackson at the head of the nation.

IV.

THE SECOND TRANSITIONAL PERIOD.

a. NOMINATIONS IN 1828.

In 1828 we come to a new spirit, a different manner. The predominating influence of the East,---that is to say, of education, wealth, training, culture; aristocracy in a word, has passed away; the leveling force of the West,---Democracy, has taken its place. The cabinet heir-at-law is actually superseded by the man of the People. The old party--the Democratic-Republican party of Jefferson---now goes under a new name, is inspired by a new force. Jackson Republicans we now call Democrats; Adams Republicans, Clay Republicans style themselves National Republicans, and later, Whigs. But the difference is, as yet, mainly one of personal preference. The parties are more like each other than the new time is like the old. Both are dominated by the spirit of Democracy, that



is to say the spirit of the masses. It is the voice of the people making itself heard. The people will govern themselves. This is the transition time from the old to the new, ---from the caucus, a distinctive mark of the old, to the convention, a distinctive mark of the new.

The campaign of 1828 was one of the longest and most bitter in our history. The national caucus was a thing of the past,(1) the national convention was still of the future and therefore every state must needs express its choice or its choice would not be known. Nominations were made by states only, but neither exclusively by caucus nor exclusively by convention. In October 1825, the legislature of Tennessee nominated Andrew Jackson;(2) and for the next three years convention after convention, caucus after caucus, kept the presidential question fresh in the minds of the people. No less than forty state-recommendations were made. Every state save Connecticut expressed a choice, some expressed two, some three, while in New York, three state conventions and two legislative caucuses were held. But for every state convention there were scores of county and town meetings. Every

(1) A very faint attempt was made to hold a caucus as usual, but it never went further than a suggestion.

(2) National Republican, October 25, 1825.

county considered itself of great importance in the grand drama. It must needs express its choice; appoint its committee, and pass its resolutions. In the larger towns great mass meetings were held, parades were organized, and hickory trees were planted with all the solemnity of modern Arbor Day "exercises." In short, these three years, preceding the first election of Andrew Jackson, must have been, to the enthusiastic political patriot, the most "glorious" time in the history of campaign politics.(1)

A reference to the map (2) will show the number and location of the state conventions and caucuses; having noted the fact, however, that a great many conventions were held, we are mainly concerned with their organization..

This, in general, was much the same throughout the country. It must not be supposed that they were definitely organized conventions---the product of any such system of machinery as exists today. In principle, however, they were much the same as the state conventions of the present time. The idea of nominations being made by delegates elected directly by the people existed then as it exists now. The usual

(1) A really elaborate celebration was held at New Orleans on the 8th of January, 1828, to commemorate the Battle of New Orleans. General Jackson was present, and, it is said, read some interesting essays.

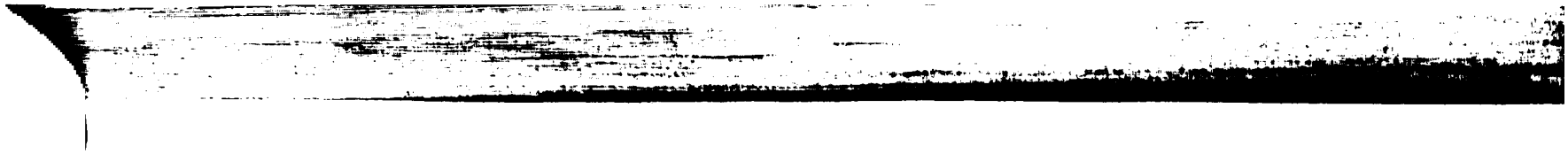
(2 See end of thesis.

preceding was something as follows. A county convention, or a legislative caucus, or perhaps some general committee suggests that a state convention be held and names the date. The counties respond by holding informal meetings at which resolutions are drawn up, committees are appointed, perhaps a nomination made, and finally delegates (any number) appointed to the proposed convention. These delegates, usually uninstructed, assemble, organize, present credentials, listen to speeches, issue an address, draw up and pass resolutions, urge the counties to organize and so on. The nominations were made in the form of resolutions which were adopted by the convention when presented to it for its approval.(1)

Such, in general, were the state conventions at this period. A more detailed account of two or three representative state-conventions, may, however, be more to the point.

1. A convention of Adams supporters met at Richmond, Virginia, on the 8th of January, 1828. Two hundred delegates, representing seventy seven counties, were present. The delegates were, without exception, so far as I know, elected in county meetings, some counties sending as low as three, others

(1) The method of nominating by resolutions was quite general at this period. The plan of voting by delegates was not adopted, I think, until the time of the National Convention in 1832.



as high as eleven. All were known to be opposed to Jackson, but a few counties instructed their delegates still more definitely. Those from Mason county were "to use their influence in preparing an electoral ticket for J. Adams."(1) Norfolk sent four delegates "any one or more of which shall be compelled to act."(2) And from Fairflax came eleven delegates "with full powers."(3) It was resolved by the convention:

To recommend John Quincy Adams for the presidency and Richard Rusk for the vice presidency.

To print and transmit thirty thousand copies of the address to the convention.

To appoint a central correspondence committee and local corresponding committees.

To publish the address of Henry Clay.

To provide for the expenses of the counties by levying a tax of five dollars on each member.

To thank the legislature for the use of the hall, etc.(4) The convention adjourned on the 12th of January.

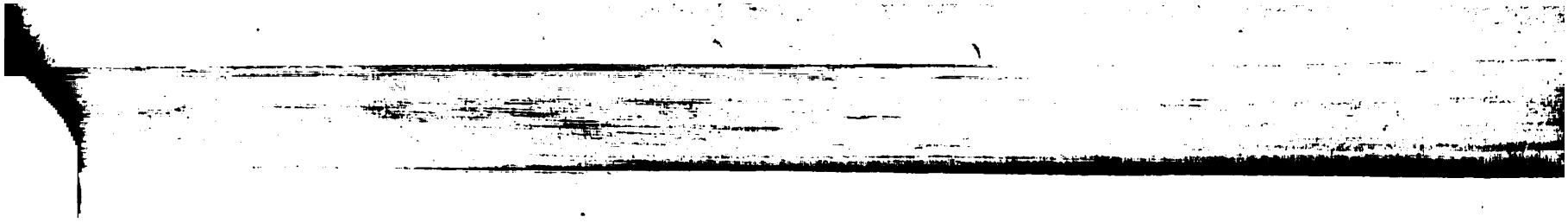
2. Early in the year 1828, an address to the people of New York contained the following:(5) "With a view, therefore,

(1) National Intelligence; Nov. 24, 1827.

(2) " " " 21, "

(3) " " " 24, "

(4) 33 Niles, 333. (5) National Intelligence, Apr. 1, 1828



of producing union of action among citizens entertaining the same opinion - - - we recommend to the inhabitants of the several counties - - - opposed to the election of General Jackson, to choose in such manner as they shall deem proper, delegates equal in number to their representatives in the assembly, to meet in convention - - -in Albany on Tuesday, the 10th day of June next, to declare their views in relation to the subject of the next presidential election." On the 10th of June accordingly, something over a hundred delegates, representing nearly every county in the state, met at Albany. Very little, however, appears to have been done. A committee of five was appointed "with power and authority to select suitable persons to be a central corresponding committee of the state for promoting the election of Mr. Adams and Rush - - -"[1] A second election to be held at Utica on the 23rd of July was also recommended;[2] it was to be organized exactly as the one now assembled. Why this second convention was recommended, I cannot say, unless it were merely for the pleasure of holding conventions. At any rate it shows the general indefiniteness which existed.

3. A Jackson convention was held at Harrisburgh, Pennsylvania, on the 8th of January, 1828. It was recommended by the Legislature in caucus, and was organized on the same plan

(1) National Intelligence, June 17, 1828. (2) Ibid.

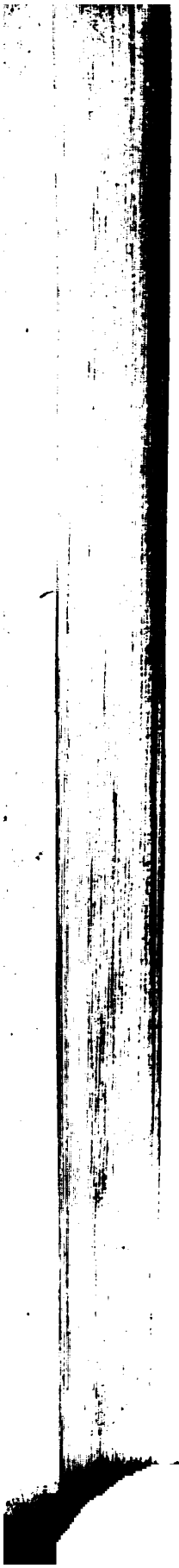
as the Albany convention of June 10th.

b.

THE CONVENTION IDEA, STATE AND NATIONAL, CONTRASTED.

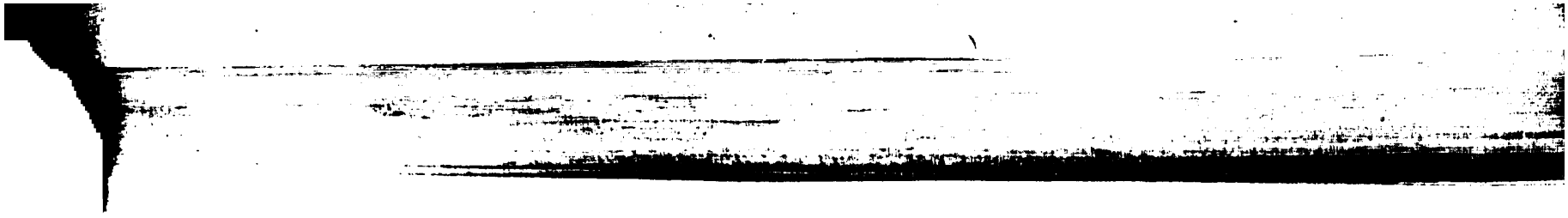
Such were the State conventions in 1828. They are the National Conventions in little, ~~as Herbert Spencer says.~~ There is no difference in principle between a state convention and a national convention. The latter is merely the application of the former to a larger area. The state conventions had been gradually developing. In state politics the change from pure legislative caucus to the pure nominating convention was not made abruptly, as in national politics, but through the intermediate form of the mixed caucus. In the north this form came into use during the decade from 1810 to 1820; but although at this time it was the most common method, the pure convention was increasingly used as it became more and more practicable and better known to the people. As early as 1807 a state convention was proposed in Pennsylvania. Nothing came of it; but the next year, we are told, there was a "kind of state convention" held in that state.(1) In 1812, as we know, at least four state conventions were held and in 1815 a state convention in Rhode Island nominated Monroe.(2)

(1) Miller. Nominating Convention in Pennsylvania. I 40-41. (2) McMaster, IV. p. 363.



But not until 1817 do we find definitely organized state conventions for the nomination of state officers. On the 4th of March of that year, a convention met at Harrisburgh, Pennsylvania, composed of delegates from the counties, each county sending as many delegates as it had assemblymen in the state legislature.(1) This is a convention in every sense of the word, and from now on, such conventions, come more and more to be the regular method of making nominations, not only in Pennsylvania, but I believe, in the northern states generally. By 1820 the caucus had practically disappeared from Pennsylvania, and from 1820 to 1830 it was gradually superseded by the definitely organized convention throughout the north. In the south, the old methods lingered longest. But by 1828 the state convention, as an institution, was fairly well established in most parts of the country. The people were perfectly familiar with it and it suffered little or no opposition. Now that the national caucus had been abolished, we naturally look to see its place filled by the national convention. That is to say, the next step to take is the application of this state convention idea, so familiar to the people, to the larger area of national politics. As a matter of fact, this is just the step that is next taken, and in 1832, we have the national nominating convention. There was nothing

(1) Miller. Nominating Conventions in Pennsylvania. p. 33



strange about it; it was not a novelty; it did not spring up out of nothing. And when we read in Professor ~~Lummis's~~ Sumner's[1] book that the anti masons invented the national political convention we must not take what he says at all literally. It would not be fair to the anti-masons. But even had they first suggested the idea of a national political convention, we should hardly say that they invented the institution. Institutions are not usuallly invented, I believe, though of course there is always the possibility of an exception being necessary to prove the rule. But even then I do not believe the national political convention can ever justly be made to do that service.

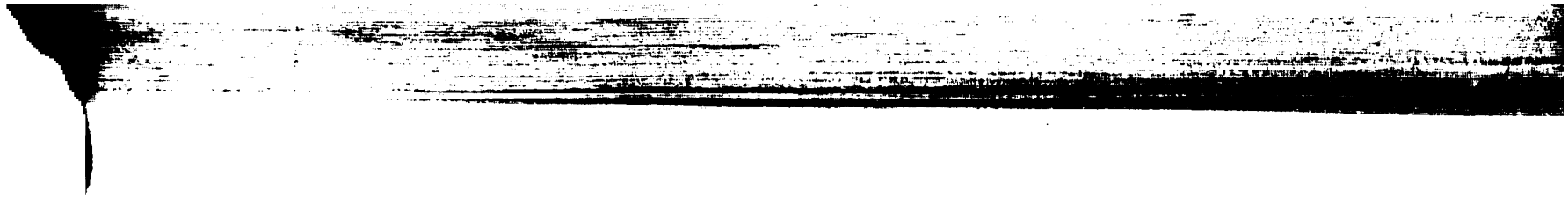
c.

SUGGESTIONS FOR A NATIONAL CONVENTION PRIOR TO 1830.

But even the thought of applying the convention idea to national politics was not original with the anti masons; such a scheme was agitated before the anti masonic party existed. Mr. Parton in his life of Jackson quotes a letter written in 1831, which he says, suggests, "for the first time the plan of nominating president and vice president by national convention---an idea borrowed from New York politics.[2] This,

(1) ~~Parton~~. Andrew Jackson ~~III. 381-5.~~ ¶ 26 ℔

(2) Parton " " III. 381-5.



as we know, is not at all the truth of the matter. In 1816, Aaron Burr proposed some kind of a national convention to nominate Jackson;(1) and Matthew Carey advocated the plan in his Olive Branch.(2) In 1822 a correspondent of Niles in opposing the caucus, came to the conclusion that the people must make the selections for themselves. "To do this they must choose delegates in all the states to meet in some central place to select---suitable persons for the presidency - - - the delegates so choosen in no case to be <u>incumbants</u> or <u>expectants</u> of office."(3) In 1824, we are told, the friends of Mr. Calhoun suggested that the nomination should be made by a national convention of delegates elected by the people; and the Franklyn Gazette has much to say in support of such a scheme.(4) There was, however, so far as I know, no suggestion or discussion of the plan during the whole campaign of 1828;(5) and very little popular agitation in 1832. "Since

(1) I. Lalor 354.

(2) Miller. Nominating Convention in Pennsylvania.

(3) 21 Niles, 404. (4) January 24 and February 6, 1824.

(5) A national Tariff Convention was held at Harrisburgh, July 30, 1827. It has been supposed by some to have been at bottom a political movement. There is, however, so far as I know, no evidence that such is the fact. An account of the meeting is given in 32 Niles, 388-96.

the meeting of Congress," says the National Intelligencer,(1) there has been of course, a good deal of conversation on the subject, amongst those members who are attached to National Republican Principles. From what we learn it is generally admitted that if such a convention be advisable, it cannot now be called and held before the close of the present session of Congress - - -" The newspapers had very little to say on the subject, though the possibility of the plan being carried out was certainly well known. Enough has been said to show that the plan was suggested and discussed long before it was actually carried out.

V.

THE ORGANIZATION OF THE CONVENTION.

a. Conventions of 1832.

The first National Convention held was that of the anti-masons. On the 11th day of September, 1830, twenty six delegates from ten states met at Philadelphia. They recommended that a national convention be held on the 26th of September the following year, and that each state send as many delegates as it had votes in the Electoral College.(2) The

(1) Dec. 28, 1830. (2) National Intelligencer Sept. 22, 1830.

second convention consisted of only ninety two delegates from twelve states.(1) The delegates were, for the most part, appointed in state conventions.(2) William Wirt was nominated as the candidate for president and Amos Ellmaker for vice president. An address was prepared which dealt with the qualities a president ought to posess. He should be industrious, willing and accustomed to labor, intelligent, honest, independent, vigilant, wise in judgment, prudent, disinterested and patriotic.(3) Six committees were appointed, whose duties were confined to subjects relating to masonry.

The second national convention was held by the friends of Clay, who now began to call themselves National Republicans.(4) The meeting was proposed by the Republicans of the Maryland legislature, who met in caucus on the 17th of February and resolved

"That it is expedient that a National Convention be held

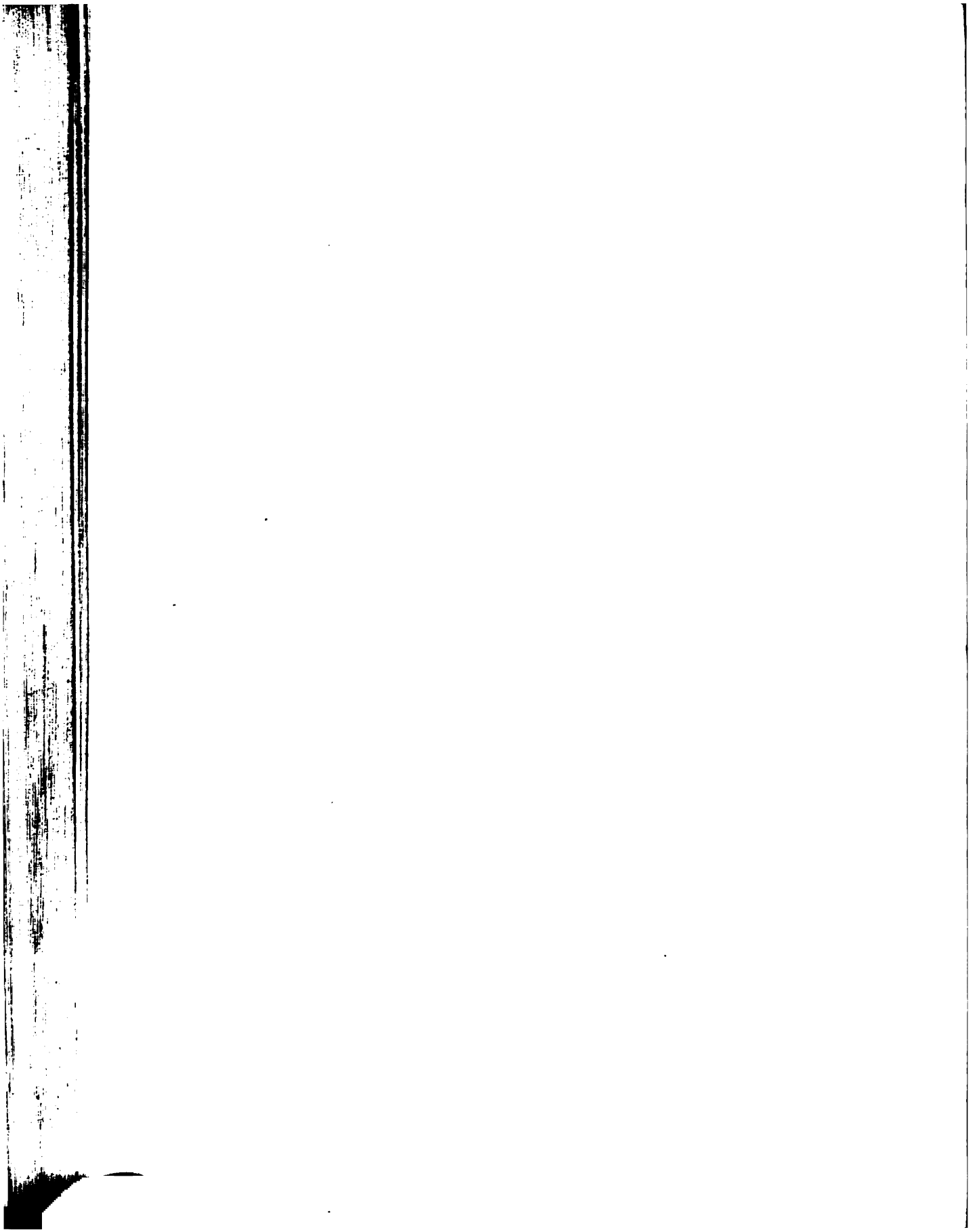
---

(1) Mostly N. E. and Middle states.

(2) National Intelligencer, May 31, 1831.

(3) 41 Niles 167.

(4) The National Intelligencer February 22, 1831 adopts it and urges all to do likewise"who would uphold the federal constitution; secure the independence and continuance of the Supreme Court; preserve a sound currency - - prevent offices becoming the booty of mere partisans and parasites; and obtain a truly responsible and visible government."



to which the people of all the states shall be invited to send delegates in which their will can be authentically ascertained.

Resolved, that it be recommended to the persons in this state opposed to the re-election of Andrew Jackson, to elect in such manner and at such time as they may deem convenient, one delegate from each congressional district, to meet in general convention in the city of Baltimore on the second Monday of December next - - -and that this meeting will appoint two delegates, one from the eastern and one from the western shore, to attend said convention.

Resolved, that our brethren of the other states, who - - - deprecate the election of Andrew Jackson be - - - - invited to meet in general convention at Baltimore - - - - by delegates equal in number to the electors of president, to which their states are respecttively entitled-----"(1)

On the 12th of December, 1831 the convention assembled.. There were present about one hundred and sixty delegates from eighteen states,(2) and the District of Columbia. In eight of the states the delegates were choosen by districts;

(1) National Intelligencer, February 24, 1831.

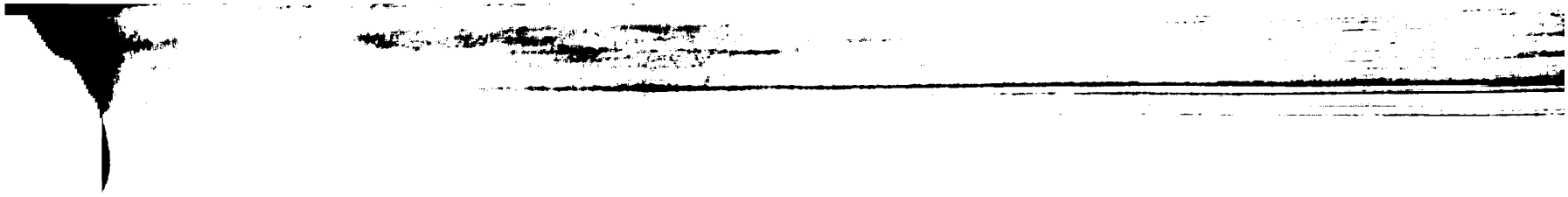
(2) Professor Sumner says there were one hundred and fifty five delegates present from seventeen states. See Life of Jackson, page 258. In Proceedings. Nat. Int. Dec 13-17/83.

in four they were appointed at state conventions and in one by a caucus of the legislature.(1) How the remaining states appointed delegates, I have not been able to learn. The following shows very well the proceeding on those states where delegates were elected in districts:(2) "A meeting of the voters of Fairfax county opposed to the reelection of Andrew Jackson - - - -is requested at the court house on the first day of October court for the purpose of concerting measures with the voters of London and Prince William counties for the election of one or more delegates to represent this congressional district at the National Republican meeting to be held in the city of Baltimore in December next. Many Voters." The state conventions in appointing delegates simply referred the matter to a committeee and then approved the actions of the committee. The delegates at large were

(1)

By Districts.	By State Convention.
Maine	New York
Pennsylvania	New Hampshire
Ohio	Kentucky
Delaware	Indiana
Maryland	
Virginia	By Caucus of the Legislature.
Louisiana	Massachusetts.
Tennessee	

(2) National Intelligence, September 24, 1831.



appointed in various ways---in Maine and Maryland, by the legislative caucus; in Louisiana, by the New Orleans district, subject to the approval of the other districts; in Kentucky, by the Louisville district, subject to approval, and in Tennessee, by the Nashville district. On the whole, the plan of choosing delegates on the principle of congressional representation was generally carried out, but in the manner of choosing little uniformity prevailed.

The convention organized by the election of a president and four vice presidents and two secretaries. When it came to the nomination of a candidate for the presidency, the roll was called and each delegate arose and gave the name of the man he wished to vote for. Henry Clay had every vote.(1) The vice president was nominated in the same manner. A committee of seven prepared an address which consisted, for the most part, of a criticism of Jackson's administration, taking up in turn the subjects of Removals, Tariff, Internal Improvements, Bank, Judiciary and the Indian questions.(2) Ten thousand copies were ordered printed. Central state corresponding committees were provisionally appointed.

The young men's convention which met at Washington from the 6th to the 12th of May, 1832, was for the most part a

(1) National Intelligencer, December 13-17, 1831.

(2) 44 Niles, 307-311.

repetition of the Clay convention of December. There were more delegates present but fewer states represented.(1) No uniformity was maintained in the choice of delegates; each district sent as many as it thought necessary to freely represent it. In organization, nothing new was developed; but a set of ten resolutions "expressive of the sense of the meeting," was reported, being, according to Bryce, the first "political platform ever put forward by a nominating body."(2)

The Democratic National Convention was held to nominate a vice president. The first suggestion probably came from Jackson, but the means used to give it the appearance of a popular movement must be accredited to shrewder, though less direct, politicians than he. Professor Sumner gives a good account of how this was done.(3) "Parton gives us one of Lewis's letters, which shows the wire pulling which preceded the first democratic convention. Kendall was in New Hampshire in the spring of 1831. Lewis wrote to him to propose that a convention should be held in May, 1832. - - -He suggested that the New Hampshire legislature should be prompted to propose it. Kendall arranged this, and wrote a letter giving an account of the meeting, resolutions, etc., which

(1) 16 states. 300 delegates.

(2) American Commonwealth II. 144.

(3) Life of Jackson, 203.

was published anonymously in the "Globe" July 6th, 1831. The "Globe" took up the proposition and approved of it. The convention met at Baltimore, May 21, 1832." The Globe was not alone in approving it; it was approved generally. Over three hundred delegates from twenty three states were present. By far the greater number of delegates were appointed by districts, though New York and Tennessee and possibly other states, held state conventions at which the delegates were appointed.

There was greater effort towards organization in this convention than there had been in the other. A committee of one from each state, each state appointing its own ~~number~~ member, reported a set of rules for the government of the convention, the most important of which related to the manner of voting for the vice presidential candidate:(1)

"Resolved, that each state be entitled, in the nominations to be made for a candidate for the vice presidency, to a number of votes ~~equla~~ equal to the number to which they would be entitled in the electoral colleges under the new apportionment - - - -; and that two thirds of the whole number of votes in the convention shall be necessary to constitute a choice.

Resolved, that in taking the vote the majority of the

(1) 42 Niles, 234.

delegates from each state designate the person by whom the vote of that state shall be given."

Balloting was to continue until a candidate was nominated, in case no decision was reached on the first ballot. The president appointed a committee of one from each state to prepare an address to the people; and general correspondence committees for each state were also appointed by the same authority.

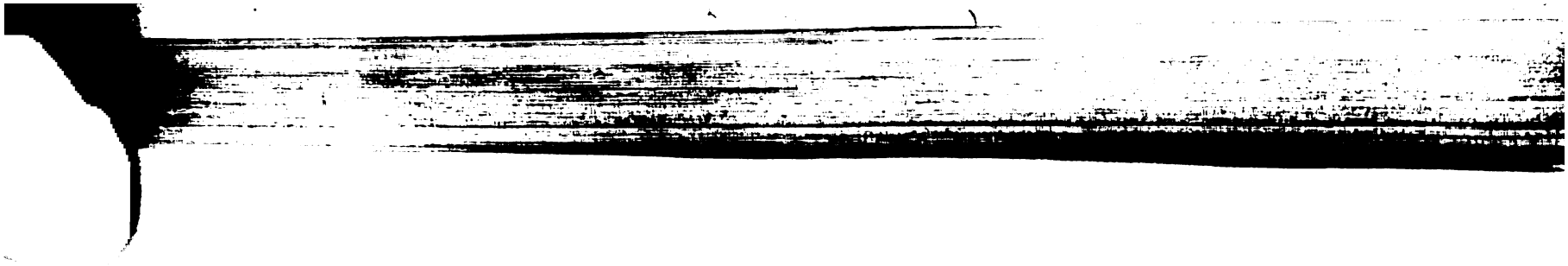
Such were the National Conventions in 1832. I will now trace the further developement, first of the Whig National Convention, and then of the Democratic National Convention; afterwards contrasting the two types thus developed.

b. DEVELOPEMENT OF THE WHIG AND REPUBLICAN CONVENTIONS.

The Whig convention never obtained a satisfactory organization. No single method of electing delegates was ever universally adopted, though the general ticket or state convention system gained in favor. The method of nominating candidates also varied in the different conventions. The Whig convention, in short, was just achieving an organization when the Whig party came to an end.

In 1836 no convention was held.

In 1840 the Whigs in the national congress at the request of a number of meetings in various parts of the country

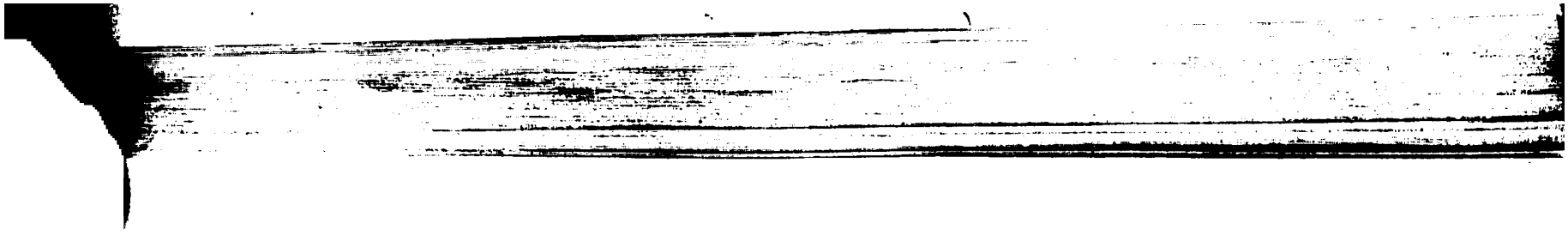


proposed a time and place for holding the convention.[1] The only novel thing in the way of organization which the convention developed was a cumbrous rule for the nomination of candidates.[2] It was never used again. Here it is:

"ORDERED, that the delegates from each state - - - -assemble as a delegation and appoint a committee, not exceeding three in number, to receive the opinions and views of such delegation and communicate the same to the assembled committees of all the delegations, to be by them respectively communicated to their principals; and that thereupon the delegates from each state be requested to assemble as a delegation and ballot for candidates - - -and having done so, to commit the ballot designating the vote of each candidate, and by whom given, to its committee, and thereupon all the committees shall assemble and compare the several ballots, and report the result of the same, to their several delegations, together with such facts as may bear upon the nomination, and said delegations shall forthwith re-assemble and ballot again for candidates - - - and again commit the result to the above committees, and if it shall appear that a majority of the ballots are for any one man for candidate - - - -said committees shall report the result to the convention for its

(1) Harrisburgh, Penn. December 4, 1839. See 54 Niles 178.

(2) 57 Niles, 225.



consideration; but if there shall be no such majority then the delegations shall repeat the balloting until such a majority shall be obtained, and then report the same to the convention for its consideration.

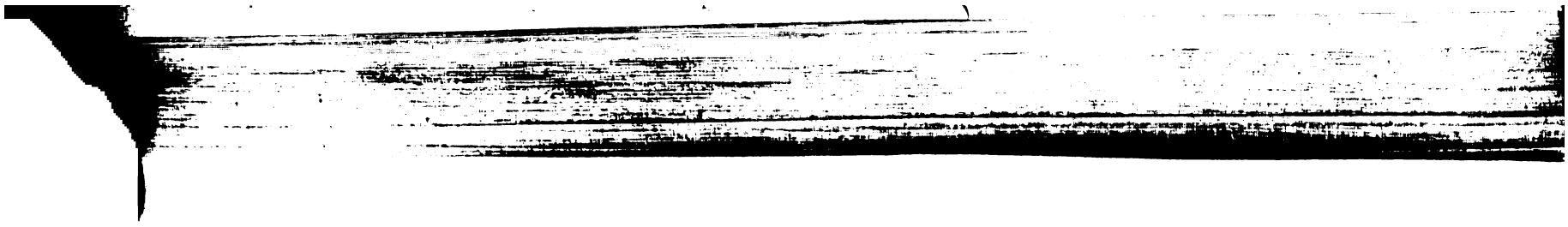
That the votes of a majority of each delegation shall be reported as the vote of that state and each state represented here shall vote its full electoral vote by such delegations in the committee."

According to Von Holst (1) this rule was the result of political intrigue. Prominent men in the convention who had favored Clay and others, made speeches after the nomination of Harrison in which they declared their intention cordially to support the nominee of the convention. No platform was adopted. The practice of 1836 of holding a young men's ratification meeting was revived, and a grand celebration was held at Baltimore. (2)

---

(1) See Constitution and Political History of the U. S. Vol. II. 361-369. According to Von Holst it was a scheme planned before the convention in New York. The speeches which were made after the nominations he says were the "loud Judas-kiss by means of which it was attempted to conceal how dirty the work accomplished was."

(2) For a ~~wonderful~~ remarkable account of this meeting see 58 Niles, 652. A good extract is copied by Stanwood. The



The expediency of holding a National Convention was again discussed by the Whigs in 1844. So long as this question is discussed the institution can hardly be said to be firmly established. South Carolina agreed with Pennsylvania, Maryland, Massachusetts and many other states, in thinking such a convention ought to be held; but she went further than they in attempting to secure better organization by proposing: (1) That the delegates from each state should equal the number of electoral votes cast by that state; and (2) that each district should appoint its own delegate, and the delegates at large be appointed by the state, in conventions. (2)

(note continued)

account is from the Baltimore Patriot and begins as follows: :Monday was a proud day for Baltimore, for Maryland, for the Union. It was the day on which the young Whigs of all the states were to meet in grand convention. Never before was seen such an assembly of the people in whose persons are concentrated the sovereignty of the government. In the language of the president of the day,---Every mountain sent its rill,--every valley its stream--and lo!--The Avalanche of the People is here!"

(2) 64 Niles 169.

These suggestions were not generally acted on however; and the whole question was finally left to the Whigs in congress who recommended Baltimore, the 3rd of May, 1844.

The convention organized by the appointment---through a committee of two from each state---of a president, six secretaries, and twenty six vice presidents. Clay was nominated by acclamation, and Frelinghuysen by a viva voce vote. Feeling that the convention's actions should be authoratative it was resolved:(1)

"That the nation be requested to meet on the 3rd of July next in state conventions in all of the states of the union, to respond to the nominations."

A platform was adopted, and from now on no party, meeting in convention, failed to present its views on important questions, in a series of resolutions. As usual a young men's ratification meeting was held.(2)

In 1848 the Whigs in congress again determined the time and place for holding the convention.(3) It was generally agreed that one should be held and the only thing now lacking was a recognized authority for calling it. This convention made an effort at organization. The rules of the National

(1) 66 Niles, 146.

(2) Ibid 146-161.

(3) 7th of June, Philadelphia.

House of Representatives were adopted so far as applicable; and in the vote[1] for candidates, each state cast as many votes as it was entitled to in the electoral college, and no more. The convention of 1852 adopted these rules and by the appointment of a national central committee to call the next convention and have general supervision of the campaign, completed the organization of the Whig National Convention, so far as it was ever completed.[2] The convention of 1856 which ratified the nominations of the American party, and in which no changes of organization were made, was, I believe, the last Whig convention ever held.

Since the Whigs formed the most considerable element of the Republican party, it will be well to note the organization of the first Republican convention. To do this we must go back a step.

The plan of allowing each district more than one delegate, as we have seen, never was adopted by the Whigs. I believe it was first suggested by the Free Soil Party. On the 20th of July, 1848, a mass meeting at Columbus issued a call for a national Free Soil Convention. It suggested that three delegates be sent from every district and six additional dele-

(1) Viva voce.

(2) Daily National Intelligence, June 19 and 23, 1852.

gates, and six "conferees" from every state. The convention adopted the rules which the mass meeting suggested.(1) The Free Soil convention of 1852 added the following rule to those already adopted:(2)

" - - -in voting for president or vice president, or platform, the delegate or delegates from each state shall cast the full electoral vote through their chairman; but that when delegations differ, the chairman shall declare the proportion, and not give the vote of the majority as a whole." This convention, the last of the Free Soil conventions, also appointed a national committee.

The first Republican convention was held in 1856; and, although it cannot be said to be a mere continuation of either the Whig or the Free Soil conventions, yet it was doubtless influenced, in its organization, by men who had formerly belonged to those parties. By 1856 the Republicans had organized in many of the northern states, and it was by the chairmen of several of the state central committees(3) that a meeting

(1) New York Weekly Tribune, August 19, 1848.

(2) New York Evening Post, August 17, 1852.

(3)

Maine	New York	Michigan
Vermont	Pennsylvania	Indiana
Massachusetts	Ohio	Wisconsin

was called for the 22nd of February, 1856, "for the purpose of perfecting the national organization and providing for a national delegate convention of the Republican party."(1) At this meeting the committee on organization recommended:(2) 1st. A national executive committee of one from each state, with power to fill vacancies from states not represented; 2nd. A national convention on the 17th of June, to which each state should send four delegates at large, and two delegates for every congressional district; and 3rd the immediate and complete organization of state and county committees in every state in which they were not already organized. The convention of the 17th of June, organized in the usual manner, by appointing various non-permanent committees. A national executive committee was appointed for the ensuing four years. The committee on credentials reported no contested seats save in Pennsylvania. It further recommended giving each district three votes through the chairman of the state delegation.(3) This rule, which was adopted, seems to show the influence of Free Soil men in the convention. The states did not all vote in strict accordance with this rule,---probably on account of

(1) New York Weekly Herald, March 1, 1856.

(2) Ibid.

(3) New York Weekly Herald, June 21, 1856.

incomplete delegations---but they did so essentially.(1) Whatever this convention may have lacked in definiteness of organization, the following one, held in 1860, was thoroughly organized. The national committee in issuing the call, stated the rules for the election of delegates. Each district was to

(1) Mr. Stanwood says of this convention, p. 204: "The first Republican national convention was one of the most spontaneous ever known in our political history. The delegates were not choosen by any settled rule nor was there much, if any, regard paid to the number of votes to which a state should be entitled. New York cast 96 votes, Pennsylvania 81, and Ohio 69." This is rather too strong. The meeting was, as we have seen, called by a former meeting which was itself called by the chairmen of nine state committees. A "settled rule" was proposed and adopted by the convention with slight modifications, i. e. each district was to send three delegates and each delegate was to have one vote, through the chairman. There were at this time, 33 districts in New York, 25 in Pennsylvania, and 21 in Ohio. According to the rule these states should have 99, 75 and 63 votes respectively. If now we assume that each state voted six delegates at large, as it naturally would,---and there is nothing in the evidence directly averse to the assumption,---then the vote of these

send two delegates and each state four at large.[1] In the convention itself, it was decided that each delegate should have one vote, to be announced as voted, by the chairman of the state delegation of which he was a member. A majority of all the delegates present was sufficient to nominate. The platform was to be reported before the nominations were made.[2]

c. DEVELOPEMENT OF THE DEMOCRATIC CONVENTION.

The convention of 1836 was recommended by state conventions in New York and New Jersey.[3] A meeting at Harrisburgh decided that it was not expedient to recommend a national convention.[4] There was very little discussion of the

(note continued)

states would be 105, 81, and 69. This corresponds fairly well with the number of votes actually cast, as quoted by Mr. Stanwood.

(1) Press and Tribune Documents for 1860, No. 3.

(2) Ibid.

(3) 48 Niles, 89.

(4) 45 Niles 226.

matter, however, and the suggestions of the New York meeting were followed.(1) All the states save four(2) were represented; and, though they were limited in voting to their electoral strength, the number of delegates actually sent greatly exceeded that number.(3) The committee on rules reported in favor of the rules of the convention of 1832,(4) and recommended besides: that the rules of the House of Representatives be adopted as far as applicable; that the candidates be voted for separately; and that the president appoint five delegates to draft an address. In the convention it was decided, that "on all questions to be decided by the convention the vote shall be taken by states instead of per capita if it be desired by any one state, each state to be entitled to a number of votes equal to their presidential electors."(5)

In 1840 the central committee of New Hampshire issued a call for a national convention to nominate Martin Van Buren.(6) The call was ~~opposed~~ disapproved by many state conventions, by the Democrats in Congress, and by the party generally. The convention met at Baltimore, May 5th. Twenty one states were represented, of

(1) 20th of May, 1835.

(2) South Carolina , Tennessee, Alabama, Illinois.

(3) Maryland sent 183. Pennsylvania sent a "double set;" both were admitted, thus satisfying neither party.

(4) See Ante p. ~~180.~~ 68 (5) 48 Niles 206. (6) 57 Niles, 304.

which a greater number than usual elected their delegates by the state convention system. This method was gradually superseding the district plan, especially in the north. Van Buren was nominated by resolution[1] and no vice president was nominated.[2] The resolutions adopted at this meeting are important in the developement of the platform.[3]

At least five different dates were suggested for the convention of 1844. Philadelphia papers urged that it be held there instead of at Baltimore, and an early date was thought desirable by many, in order to give defeated men and factions time to become reconciled to the decision of the convention.[4] Meanwhile the question of the best method of electing delegates was warmly discussed. South Carolina was the principal state advocating the state convention system. The reason is sufficiently plain. It was thought that Calhoun might receive the nomination if all the delegates were elected and instructed in districts; but if the other prevailed, Van Buren was sure of being chosen. The main argument for the district system was that it protected minorities.[5] Against it, it was urged that no uniformity was obtained, and hence,

(1) 68 Niles, 147.

(2) McKee, Platforms, p. 25.

(3) See Appendix II.

(4) 63 Niles, 145. (5) 63 Niles, 358.

in preliminary votes, no fairness prevailed. Virginia, for example, sending five delegates from each district, would outvote, in questions on which a per capita vote was taken, fourteen states sending only one delegate from each district. The southern states and some of the New England states used the district system; but the middle states and all of the western states, so far as I know, preferred the other method.(1)

The principle feature of the convention itself was a struggle over the two-thirds rule.(2) After long and violent opposition it was finally adopted. An attempt to rescind precipitated the discussion again and the question was debated at length.(3) The rule was not repealed, and in general the rules of the last convention were adopted, although the confusion which continued throughout, makes it difficult to determine the matter with certainty. A new step was taken,

(1) For discussions of this subject, See

63 Niles 358

64 " 349 409-410

65 " 24, 445, 51, 55, 57, 91-3, 310.

(2) The date of the convention was May 27, 1844.

(3) The confusion can hardly be called debatery. It was rather a period of running around, yelling, climbing over benches, and various other attempts of all the members trying to catch the president's eye at the same time.

however, in the appointment of a national central committee of fifteen.(1)

The duties of the committee were not defined, however, and it was probably not a permanent committee anyway, since the convention of 1848 was not called by any such committee, as naturally would have been the case had one existed. The convention, which, as a matter of fact, was called by the Democrats in congress, organized in the usual manner by the adoption of the usual rules. Two sets of delegates from New York---"Hunkers" and "Barn Burners"---presented themselves for admission, each claiming to represent the genuine democracy of the state. The committee on credentials made an oath to support the convention's nominee a condition of ~~entrance~~ proceeding to consider their credentials. The "Old Hunkers" took the oath, but the "Barn Burners" refused to do so, and the committee reported in favor of the former.(2) The report of the committee was not entirely satisfactory, and it was moved to recommit. As an amendment, Mr. Bartley, of

(1) 66 Niles 211. A "Tyler and annexation convention" was held at Baltimore, May 27, 1844. It was rather more of a mass-meeting than a convention, and adds nothing to the developement of the institution. See 66 Niles, 218.

(2) The Barn Burners were suspected by the committee of being Abolitionists; and it was thought they would not take the oath proposed. When the report was made, however, they ex-

Ohio, moved to admit both delegations, give New York seventy two votes, and increase the votes of the other states in proportion. According to one report,(1) this proposition was received with laughter and was withdrawn. It was not withdrawn however. The whole matter was tabled, but later it was called up, and Mr. Bartley's motion, so modified as to give New York only the usual thirty six votes, was passed. New York did not vote on the nominations; the Barn Burners left the convention, and afterwards the "Old Hunkers" were formally ~~formerly~~ received as the New York delegation.

The committee which had been appointed to "raise a platform," besides raising their platform, introduced a resolution, proposing to receive from each state, in future conventions, only as many delegates as it was entitled to votes in the electoral college. This was adopted. Mr. Hallett of Massachusetts, introduced the following resolution which was also adopted:

"Resolved, that a committee of one from each state be appointed by the delegations to promote the democratic cause and carry out the objects of this convention, and be called

(note continued)

plained this refusal by saying that, if bound by such an oath, they would not be on an equality with the other delegates.

(1) Daily National Intelligence, May 26, 1848.

the Democratic Central Committee of the United States."[1] The appointment of a permanent national committee makes an important point in the organization of the national convention. It furnishes an authority for calling and arranging the convention, and more important still, constitutes a directing force in state and county committee organization, always tending toward unity and harmony of action. It is the centralizing force which quickly brings the machine to its maximum of efficiency.

One more step completes the organization of the Democratic National Convention in its essential features. In 1852 the chairman of the national committee made a report,[2] in

(1) National Intelligencer, May 27, 1848. The first committee which can be called national, was appointed by the anti-masons. In September, 1837, delegates from four states assembled and "Resolved that the convention will adjourn to meet again on the second Tuesday of November, 1838, at Philadelphia, unless sooner re-assembled by the National committee." The National committee referred to, which was appointed at this meeting, consisted of ten members only. At the November meeting a committee of one from each state was appointed to "select a "national committee of correspondence."

(2) Proceedings of National Democratic Convention, 1852. p. 69.

which he recommended that in future conventions each state be entitled to twice as many delegates as it had votes in the electoral college,---two from each district and four at large. His report was adopted and the rule has prevailed ever since. A peculiar practice remains to be noted, which, however, has very little effect on the organization of the convention. From 1856 to 1868 inclusive, each delegate was given only one half of a vote, so that the number of full votes in the convention still equaled the electoral vote.(1) This rule might have a slight effect, in as much as a majority or two thirds of the delegates, would not necessarily make a majority of the votes. In 1872 each delegate was given a full vote and the two thirds rule which had obtained up to this time was abolished in favor of the majority rule.(2) The two thirds rule was re-adopted in 1876.

I cannot better summarize the rules which have governed the Democratic national conventions since 1852, than by quoting from the official proceedings of 1884. The reference is

(1) See Official Proceedings. (2) I have carefully examined the official proceedings of the conventions of 1872, but fail to find any resolution or action of the convention for either of these changes. A resolution was passed adopting the rules of the last convention until the committee on permanent organization could report. When the committee reported,

ridiculous in itself, and shows the force of custom and the meaningless formality of the adoption of rules in the later conventions. The reference is to page nine of the official proceedings: "A careful examination of the official records of National Democratic conventions reveals the fact that each convention in turn adopted the rules of the proceeding convention as far back as 1856. The convention of 1856 adopted the rules of the convention of 1852, but the official stenographer was unable to obtain a copy of the proceedings of that convention (if any was published). What the rules were originally cannot be stated with certainty." The rules which the official stenographer really wanted are as follows:(1)

"1. Resolved, that the rules of the House of Representatives as far as applicable,----be adopted as the rules of this convention.

2. Resolved, that two thirds of the whole number of votes given shall be necessary to a nomination of candidates for President and Vice President of the United States by this convention.

3. Resolved, that in voting upon any question which may arise in the proceedings of this convention, the vote shall be

(note continued)

nothing was said about rules. That the changes were made, however, the proceedings ~~already~~ Clearly show.

(1) Official Proceedings of the Convention, p. 1852.

taken by states at the request of any one state, each state to be entitled to the number of votes to which said state will be entitled in the next electoral college, without regard to the number of delegates in attendance; the manner in which said vote is to be cast to be decided by the delegation of each state for itself." The official stenographer evidently failed to note the changes which were made in the convention of 1872.

I wish now to return and gather up some scattered threads: First, a few words on what I shall call the authority of the convention; and Second, a comparison of the two types of conventions which have been developed.

d. GROWTH OF THE IDEA OF AUTHORITY.

Naturally the first National Conventions did not speak with a great deal of authority. They were on the same plane with state conventions except in so far as they represented the party more fully, and no one would have asserted that state nominations were subject to the action of the National convention, or that a member of a party might not disregard their decisions without being false to his party. State nominations did not cease with the advent of the National

convention; they were made the same as ever, and often, too, in direct opposition to the will of the National convention. So far from its authority being at once recognized, the National convention was at first the subject of some little opposition. The Nashville Banner, speaking of the proposed convention of 1836, says:(1) "So long as we live and breathe American air we will resist the insidious proposition to lay at the feet of village politicians and placemen the inevitable privilege of thinking and acting for ourselves in the choice of our rulers." Mr. Niles thinks the convention plan is already following the caucus plan. It has failed in Pennsylvania, he says, and must fail everywhere unless measures and not men are made the objects of the conventions.(2) A paper called the "Appeal," was started with the avowed object of supporting Judge White and opposing the "office-holders" convention which had been "ordered" to be held. "To submit the selection of President to a convention of office holders or of persons delegated as their representatives, would be to convert the electoral franchise into a mere echo of an official dictati-

(1) 48 Niles, 58.

(2) Ibid.

Calhoun names the National convention as one of the means of corrupt partisans in their systematic attempt to "stifle the voice of American liberty." See Works II. 338-9.

But this centralizing force soon secured recognition, because it was just what the new democracy needed. As early as 1834, Kentucky named Richard M. Johnson for the presidency "subject to the action of the national convention;" and in the campaign of 1840 we find similar restrictions on state nominations in all parts of the country. An Ohio Whig convention in 1838, recommended "W. H. Harrison, but at the same time pledge their cordial support to the nomination of that convention (i. e. National Convention, 1840) should it fall on either of the other distinguished statesmen, Henry Clay or Daniel Webster, whose names are prominent as Whig candidates - - -;"(1) and a Virginia convention, the following year resolved, "That it be strenuously recommended to the National Democratic Whig convention - - - -to consider no man's name before that body - - - -who shall not be pledged to withdraw it and decline a poll, if his name shall not be the name selected as that of the candidate of his party. Resolved, that it is - - -recommended to the national convention, when they shall have selected the candidate of the party, to pledge themselves in an address to the people of the United States, signed with the name of every member, that they will with all zeal support the candidate selected; Resolved, that the convention will faithfully support the candidate selected by the

(1) 54 Niles, 240, 321.

National Convention."(1)

In 1840 caucuses were very rarely held for nominating purposes; and we may consider the system, as a method of nomination, completely superseded by the state conventions. The latter were held regularly for the nomination of state officers and the election of delegates to the National convention, but rarely, if ever, for any other purpose. Not only were the conventions thoroughly and formerly organized, but the whole plan of state, district and county meetings was being unified and perfected by means of an intricate and correlated committee system.(2) It is the period of passion for organization, and every good American is coming to feel that he is essential to the system and has a part to play.

(1) 56 Niles, 309.

(2) It must not be imagined that these committees were now appointed for the first time. The permanent county committees became well established about the time of the establishment of the county convention----say 1804; and the state committee about the time of the establishment of the state convention,----say 1824. It is the process of unification and correlation which is now being rapidly completed, and the national committee furnishes the final step in the process.

In 1842 an early convention was recommended, in order, as it was said, to allow defeated men and factions to become reconciled to the decision of the convention.[1] In 1843 Virginia again speaks as follows:[2]

"Resolved, that any individual, however eminent, who refuses to abide by the decision of a fairly elected and fairly conducted National convention and to give its nominee his cordial support, forfeits his claims to the confidence of the party."

A slight tendency to defy the National convention again crops out, this time in South Carolina, a state never over-friendly to centralization. It is principally a matter of the newspapers, however, as when, for instance, the Edgefield Advertiser hoists its presidential flag thus: "For President, John C. Calhoun, not subject to the action of any convention."[3] A Charleston meeting, on the other hand, resolves to support the nominee whoever he may be; and a New Hampshire paper urges that state to nominate Daniel Webster subject "of course," to the action of the National convention to be called in May, 1844.[4] The Whig National convention itself, however, wished to make doubly certain that its action would be sustained and it was

(1) 63 Niles, 145.

(2) 64 Niles, 22.

(3) 63 Niles, 117

(4) 66 Niles, 146.

resolved to request the states to meet in conventions, on the 3rd of July and "respond to the nominations."(1)

By 1848, I think, we may safely say, the National convention is fully recognized as the final authority on presidential nominations, and states make recommendations only to bring "favorite sons" before the convention.(2)

b. TWO TYPES OF CONVENTION.

From the first there has been a fundamental difference between the two dominant parties in the organization of their conventions,---a difference which is in essence the difference between localism and centralization. It is, perhaps, not too much to say that the two dominant parties of the present day, stand, in a general way, for these two ideas; and it is interesting to note that the two types of convention which they

(1) 66 Niles, 140.

(2) However this may be, we have it on the authority of Niles (LXXII--128) that a certain politician, who claimed the authority of the National convention over all other nominations, was answered by a profane six-foot-two Kentuckian, "National Convention be d----d! I tell you General Taylor is going to be elected by spontaneous combustion."

have developed, correspond to the theories for which they stand. This difference turns on the so-called unit-rule. In the proper sense of the word, however, the unit-rule is no rule at all; but rather the lack of a rule. It is, in short, a policy of non-interference. With the Democrats each state decides for itself whether it will vote as a unit or not; and the national convention refuses to interfere with that decision. The authority of the national convention, that is to say, is inferior to the authority of the state convention, or delegation. With the Republicans, the state may decide how its delegation shall vote if it chooses, but the national convention may, not unlikely, interfere with that decision in favor of the minority. As a matter of fact, whenever states have instructed delegations to vote as a unit, the National convention has always repudiated the instruction and allowed each delegate to have his vote recorded as given. The authority of the National convention, that is to say, is superior to the authority of the state convention or delegation. In other words, the Republican national convention over-rides the state convention at will, in favor of the minority; the Democratic national convention does not. That is briefly the famous unit rule. So far from being an indication of strength in the Democratic convention, it reveals a weakness,(1) and it is

(1) I do not wish to be understood as implying that

more properly a policy of non-resistance than a rule.

Reference to the two conventions as I have traced their developement will show the truth of this. The Whigs, I believe, voted at every convention by viva voce vote, except in 1840. The convention of 1840, however, adopted a rule which was, in truth, a unit-rule, and which shows very clearly the way in which one type of convention, even at this early date, disregarded the states at will.(1)

This rule not only allowed the states to vote as a unit, but compelled every state to do so,--- a very different unit-rule than the Democratic convention ever developed. The rule, indeed, was doubtless the result of intrigue,(2) and the Whigs never, before or after interfered with the voting of the states, but the one instance shows the power of the convention. Ordinarily there was no occasion to interfere. Rarely were state delegations instructed to vote as units, and the conventions were not in favor of the system. In later years, however, states have attempted to force the unit vote in Republican conventions, but the convention has uniformly sustained the

(note continued)

this weakness was not a good thing. It may be the most excellent feature of the institution. I merely state the fact that this weakness in the authority of the Democratic National Convention does exist. (1) See Ante, p. ~~148.~~ 70 (2) See Ante, ~~144.~~ 71 note

minority.(1)

The Democratic conventions, on the other hand, show an immediate tendency in the other direction;---not a tendency, it must be remembered, in favor of forcing the unit-rule upon the states, but a tendency in favor of allowing each state to decide for itself how its vote should be given. The convention of 1832 decided that a majority of each delegation should determine "by whom the vote of that state should be given." This is vague, and, as it seems to me, cannot mean much as far as the actual method of voting is concerned. The same rule was adopted in 1836. In 1840 the nomination was made by resolution; and in 1844 I believe the rules of 1836 were adopted entire. In 1848 it was provided that on all questions the vote should be by states, at the request of any one state, each state to decide for itself the manner of voting. In 1852 this same rule was stated in the form in which it has been adopted by every convention up to 1884, and, so far as I know, by every convention since then.(2) It is stated thus:

"Resolved, that in voting upon any questions which may arise in the proceedings of this convention, the votes shall

(1) Perhaps the only instance was in the convention of 1880. New York, Pennsylvania and Illinois attempted to force a unit vote for Grant. See McKee, p. 5[illegible].

(2) Official Proceedings of the Convention of 1852.

be taken by states, at the request of any one state; each state to be entitled to the number of votes to which said state will be entitled in the next electoral college------ the manner in which said vote is to be cast to be decided by each state for itself."

To state the difference again: The Democratic National convention never interferes with the decision of a state convention or delegation, in favor of the minority; the Republican National convention does so interfere at will. The authority of the Democratic Convention is inferior to the authority of the state convention; the authority of the Republican National convention is superior to the authority of the state conventions. One stands for localism, the other for centralization.

To summarize: The national nominating system came in with the new Democracy. It came in because the new Democracy needed a means of expressing itself,--of making itself felt. The caucus, besides being entirely inadequate to the task, was thoroughly unpopular---a make shift, a go-between, tolerated until circumstances were ripe for a system, true to the representative ideas of our political life. This system was the nominating convention; and when it developed, it naturally developed in two directions----along the diverging lines of

the opposing doctrines, which have always been, and perhaps must always remain, at the basis of our political theory.

APPENDIX I.

A word as to the method of nominating public officers previous to the adoption of the constitution, may not be out of place. "Before, during, and after the Revolution," says Alexander Johnston,(1) "the inception of political action was mainly controlled by a series of unofficial coteries of leading and kindred spirits in every colony. Their existence and the popular acquiesence in their actions was due, partly to the manner in which suffrage was then limited by property qualifications, and partly to the still surviving respect for the influential classes." Mr. James Bryce agrees to this so far as to say:(2) "As far back as the middle of the last century it was the custom in Massachusetts, and probably in other colonies, for a coterie of leading citizens to put forward candidates for the offices of the town or colony, and their nominations - - -were generally accepted. This lasted on until the Revolution, for society still retained a certain aristocratic quality. Clubs sprang up, which, especially in New York state, became the organ of groups and parties, brought out candidates and conducted election campaigns; while in New England the clergy and men of substance continued to act as leaders. Presently as the

(1) Lalor. Cyclopaedia. Article Nominating Convention.

(2) American Commonwealth. II. p. 47.

democratic spirit grew and the people would no longer acquiesce in self-appointed chiefs, the legislatures began to be recognized as the bodies to make nominations for the higher Federal and State offices." Rather let us say that, since these leading and kindred spirits were doubtless themselves frequently members of the legislatures, the nominations by the "coterie" and by members of the legislatures were, so much of the time, largely identical, that the change from one to the other is quite imperceptible. If the legislatures "began to be recognized as the bodies to make nominations" it was, at least, an entirely unconscious process, and one which it is easier to state than to observe, even after the lapse of a hundred years.

This method of nominating by a "coterie" is doubtless what Mr. Andrews (1) has in mind when he uses the term "self nomination." He divides the inception of the Nominating Convention into four stages. (1) Self nomination; (2) Private caucus; (3) Legislative caucus and (4) Mixed Legislative caucus. "The first stage -- self nomination," says Mr. Andrews, "has disappeared except in the loosely settled south and extreme west where the system still prevails and the "canvass" is conducted by the personal solicitations of the candidate."

(1) Nominating Conventions in Rhode Island.

APPENDIX II.

THE PLATFORM.

The political platform in America is a part of the system of nominating conventions. The first expression of party principles took the form of long popular addresses. They were largely confined to a consideration of the virtues of one candidate and the vices of the other. Occasionally, however, the issues of the day were discussed in a manner more or less partisan and superficial. It was customary to close the address with a resolution, favoring a particular candidate, and gradually, other resolutions were added which summed up the most important facts which it was desired to impress upon the people. The next step, was, naturally, the separation of the resolution from the address, and hence we find, a little later, two committees appointed, one to prepare an address and the other to draft resolutions. Finally the address is dropped entirely, and the resolutions begin to take on the peculiar character by means of which we now distinguish the political "platform."

Mr. Charles Reemelier, speaking of the origin of the platform, says:" (1) "But however docile the party was under

(1) Review of American Politics, p. 143.

Jefferson, it was less so under Madison; and when Monroe succeeded Madison, there was peace on the surface, but serious unquietness underneath. The party desired to know where it was being taken, and it wanted to have something to say as to its own destiny and that of the country. From this desire began, between 1816-24, the party policy of having a declaration of principles and intentions before the elections, which we now have in a very intense form in the preamble and resolutions of our conventions."

This is true to a certain extent, but the first strong impetus in the developement of the platform was undoubtedly given by the war of 1812. The first state conventions were now being held; and formerly, whatever declaration of principles there had been, was confined to the county meetings. The war created a special necessity for every party to declare its principles, and of the numberless meetings which were held, few failed to draw up resolutions of some sort. As an example, I will quote from the resolutions adopted by the New York State Convention of September, 17-18, 1812.(1)

"1. Resolved, That while we condemn the war in the most unqualified terms, we are deeply sensible of the new duties and obligations, which the change in our national

(1) Boston Messenger, Oct. 2, 1812.

relations has imposed upon us; and are fully determined in our several capacities --- to obey with promptness and alacrity, all constitutional requisitions of the proper authorities, ----------.

Resolved, That we view the creation of new states out of territory not within the ancient limits of the United States, as inconsistent with the spirit of the Federal compact, and calculated to destroy the weight which the old, great and populous states ought to have in the union, and utterly to frustrate the great purpose for which they entered into the confederacy.

3. Resolved, That we consider the employment of the militia for the purposes of offensive warfare, as a palpable violation of the constitution, as extremely offensive to the people, as the most expensive and least efficient mode of conducting the war, and as a serious and alarming encroachment on the rights of the several states.

4. Resolved, That we contemplate with abhorrence, even the possibility of an alliance with the present Emperor of France.

5. Resolved, That we are firmly attached to the union of the states."

Nothing so like a modern platform appeared again, so far as I know, until 1824. The opposition to the caucus, and the personal character of the contest, seemed an incentive to

the expression of principles and intentions. The citizens of Westmoorland County, Pennsylvania, nominate Jackson and pass the following resolutions:(1)

"Resolved, That we view with anxiety the present situation of these United States. While our prostrate manufactures excite our sympathy, our enormous importations, the extravagance of the public functionaries, and national and individual embarassments, call for serious attention. And we believe that retrenchments in the public expenditures, economy in the disbursements of National treasure, and a liberal and enlightened policy toward the manufacturing interests, are imperiously required by the present state of the country, and are essential to the harmony, prosperity, and duration of the union.

Resolved, That we believe that the public interest would be promoted by a more decisive, independent and Republican administration of the government."

A single example of the numberless resolutions passed in 1827-8, must suffice. The Adams State convention in Pennsylvania, January 4, 1828, adopted the following resolutions:(2)

(1) Richmond Inquirer, January 16, 1823.

(2) National Intelligence, January 10, 1828.

"Resolved, As the opinion of this convention that the proceedings of the present administration ---have been characterized by an earnest devotion to the Republican principles and usages of their predecessors; by a steady and wakeful attention to the domestic interests and industry of the American people; and by a proper regard to the national rights and dignity in their intercourse with foreign governments.

Resolved, That the firmness and sagacity of the present administration in refusing to submit to the unjust and vexatious orders in council of the British government, in relation to the trade of the West India islands, entitle them to the thanks and gratitude of the American people.

Resolved, That by encouraging domestic manufactures and prosecuting the great plan of Internal Improvements, the sources of public and private prosperity will be enlarged, and the union of the states will be more effectually cemented.

Resolved, That in the present --- condition of our - - country - - - - -to depart from the well established custom of re-electing a president for the second term - - - -would not comport with the principles of a prudent and reflecting people.

Resolved, That when we contemplate the character and ability of General Jackson; his acknowledged incapacity for

civil office, his military temper and love of arbitrary domination; his ignorance of the constitution and principles of our government; his repeated violation of the laws ---; and his indifference, if not hostility to the great American system upon which our prosperity depends, we find additional - - - motives to oppose any change in the executive - - - .

Resolved, That the pure and honest life, the plain Republican simplicity, the various learning, and long public experience of John Quincy Adams, both qualify and entitle him to the continuance of the confidence of a people whose interests he has everywhere promoted with ability and zeal."

From 1830 the resolutions became less personal, more concise, definite, and occupied more with questions of national importance. In August, 1830, the anti-masons held a state convention at Utica and passed a series of resolutions which are considered by Mr. Schouler (1) and Mr. Sumner, to be the first political "platform" as distinguished from the old form of address. Mr. ~~Schouler~~ Sumner advances a theory to explain why the anti-masons should be the first to make use of a platform: (2) "The anti-masons came out as an anti-administration party in 1830. They held a convention at Utica in

(1) History of the United States, IV. p. 81.

(2) Life of Jackson, p. 253-4.

August, and framed a platform of national principles. This is the first "platform;" as distinguished from the old fashioned address. The anti-masons had come together under no other bond than opposition to masonry. If they were to be a permanent party, or a national party, they needed to find or make some political principles. This was their great political weakness and the sure cause of their decay. Their party had no root in political convictions. It has its root elsewhere, and in very thin soil too, for a great political organization. Since the masons were not constantly and by the life principles of their organization perpetrators of outrages and murders, they could not furnish regular fuel to keep up the indignation of the anti-masons. The anti-masons, then, put on their principles as an after-thought. For this reason, however, they needed an explicit statement of them, if possible, in a categorical form, i. e., a platform, far more than a party which had an historical origin, and traditions derived from old political controversies."

Mr. Sumner does not give the reference to the platform which he says the Utica convention adopted, and I have looked for ~~them~~ it in vain; so that I have no means of knowing what might have been their distinguishing feature. But I raise the question whether such an effort to draw a hard and fast line between the resolutions which constitute a platform and the resolutions which constitute something not a platform,

can ever be entirely successful. Whatever the anti-masons did at this convention, a year later at their national convention, an address was issued setting forth the policy which the administration should pursue.(1) This policy should comprise;---a well organized militia; the supremacy of civil over military authority; economy in the public expense; honest payment of our debts; encouragement of the great interests of agriculture, commerce and manufactures; and the diffusion of information. On the 24th of November, 1831, the legislature of Georgia recommended Jackson rather than Calhoun, because of his attitude on the union, national debt, internal improvements, and the Indian question.(2) The national convention which nominated Clay in 1831, issued an address which consisted largely of a criticism of Jackson's administration, ---a criticism which took up, in order, the questions of, Internal Improvements, Tariff, Bank, Judiciary, and the Indian question.(3) The young men's ratification meeting, which met in the following May, passed ten resolutions, which Mr. Bryce says constitute "the first political platform ever put forth by a nominating body." These resolutions are in substance as follows:(4)

(1) 41 Niles, 168. (2) Ibid 272.

(3) 41 Niles, 307-11 (4) 42 Niles, 236.

1. Fundamental principles can never be annihilated.
2. Adequate protection of American industry.
3. Internal Improvements a necessity.
4. Supreme Court, the last resort.
5. The Senate should be free in its deliberations.
6. The course of the present executive is no pledge of future patriotic action.
7. The Spoils system detrimental to our form of government.
8. The disposition of the president to accept advice from the King of Holland on the north-eastern boundary question, manifests a total lack of patriotic American feeling.
9. The manner of securing the commercial treaty with England derogatory to our national character.
10. It is the duty of every true patriot to oppose the election of Andrew Jackson and support Henry Clay.

These are the resolutions which Mr. Bryce calls the first political platform.

Now in the first place, let us ask, what is a platform as we know it, ---what do we of today mean by a political platform? Defined in brief, a platform is a pledge, consisting of principles and policy. That is to say, when a party puts forth a platform, it states, either directly or indirectly, the fundamental principles upon which it is founded,

and outlines a policy which it believes should be carried out at that particular time; further, it pledges itself, tacitly or avowedly, to act in harmony with those fundamental principles and to pursue, so far as possible, that particular line of policy. Judged by this standard, what shall we say of the resolutions which Mr. Bryce thinks constitute the first political platform? Obviously, they do not contain a statement of the fundamental principles, but only the specific policy which seemed advisable at that particular time. Less obviously, perhaps, there is little if any thought in these resolutions, of pledging the party, definitely to this line of action. So with all the resolutions, which have been noticed, up to this time.

What we must still look for then, is a conscious effort to embody in the resolutions, the fundamental principles of the party,(1) as well as its specific policy; and, further, until the authors of the resolutions have some sort of authority for pledging the party and its candidate, the platform

(1) These principles being general and not subject to change, need not be, and we will not find that they are, restated in every platform. Having been once stated they may be referred to simply, as in the case in many later platforms. But until once stated they cannot well be referred to, or tacitly assumed, and hence the platform is still incomplete.

will still lack one of its most essential features. It seems to me, therefore, that the developement of the platform cannot be truly understood apart from the growth of the idea of the authority of the convention. I will state what I mean as clearly as I can. The people came gradually to recognize the authority of the national convention. The convention, that is to say, the party leaders, also felt that the authority of the convention was being recognized by the people. They naturally wished to increase this authority; and to do so, it was policy to make their position as clear and distinct as possible. Hence they naturally and consciously sought, not only to embody in the resolutions --- through which they communicated with the people --- the general and special principles of the party, but also to strengthen the authority of the convention by making the resolutions, in return for the confidence of the people, a sort of tacit pledge for its proper use. Naturally, this did not all take place at once; and I do not think we can point to any set of resolutions, and say that this, and no other, is the first "political platform ever put forth by a nominating body."

(note continued)

The distinction between the principles and the policy of a party is drawn by the writer in the Political Science Quarterly for March, 1896, in an article entitled," What is a Party?"

It is not altogether impossible, however, to show when this conscious effort to embody in the resolutions the underlying principles of the party, was first manifested. In 1836 the Whigs held no convention, and the Democrats adopted no resolutions. But in 1840 the national convention of the latter party adopted a set of resolutions, which, if one must have a "first platform," it seems to me ought to be considered such. Here are the resolutions:

"1. Resolved, That the Federal government is one of limited power, derived solely from the constitution, and the grants of power shown therein ought to be strictly construed by all departments and agents of the government, and that it is inexpedient and dangerous to exercise doubtful constitutional powers.

2. Resolved, That the constitution does not confer upon the general government the power to commence and carry on a general system of Internal Improvements.

3. Resolved, That the constitution does not confer authority upon the Federal government - - - to assume the debts of the several states, contracted for local internal improvements or other state purposes.- - -

4. Resolved, That justice and sound policy forbid the Federal government to foster one branch of industry to the detriment of another, or to cherish the interests of one portion to the injury of another portion of our common country;

that every citizen and every section of the country has a right to demand and insist upon an equality of rights and privileges - - - - - -.

5. Resolved, That it is the duty of every branch of the government to enforce and practice the most rigid economy in conducting our public affairs, and that no more revenue ought to be raised than is required to defray the necessary expenses of the government.

6. Resolved, That Congress has no power to charter a United States Bank; that we believe such an institution - - - dangerous to our republican institutions and the liberties of the people.

7. Resolved, That Congress has no power under the constitution to interfere with or control the domestic institutions of the several states; and that such states are the sole and proper judge of everything pertaining to their own affairs, not prohibited by the constitution; that all efforts by Abolitionists, or others, made to induce congress to interfere with questions of slavery, - - - - are calculated to lead to the most alarming and dangerous consequences - - -.

8. Resolved, That the separation of the monies of the government from banking institutions is indispensable for the safety of the funds of the government and the rights of the people.

9. Resolved, That the liberal principles embodied by

Jefferson in the Declaration of Independance, and sanctioned by the constitution, which makes ours the land of liberty and the asylum of the oppressed of every nation, have ever been cardinal principles in the Democratic faith; and every attempt to abridge the present privilege of becoming citizens and the owners of soil among us ought to be resisted with the same spirit which swept the Alien and Sedition laws from our statute book."(1)

These resolutions were re-affirmed by the conventions of 1844, 1848, and to some extent by that of 1852. Additions were made and the same ideas put in a more grandiloquent form until finally, we have the long drawn out platform of the present day. In essential, however, the fundamental principles of the Democratic party are to be found in the platform of 1840.

The Whigs adopted a single resolution in 1844, which comprised, as was said, the principles of the Whig party. In reality they are little more than a statement of the policy for that particular campaign.(2)

"Resolved, That these principles may be summed as comprising: a well regulated national currency; a tariff for revenue to defray the necessary expense of the government,

(1) McKee. Platforms, p. 24.

(2) McKee. Platforms, p. 28.

and discriminating with special reference to the protection of the domestic labor of the country; the distribution of the proceeds from the sale of public lands; a single term for the presidency; a reform of executive usurpations; and generally such an administration of the affairs of the country, as shall impart to every branch of the public service the greatest practical efficiency, controlled by a well regulated and wise economy."

The resolutions of the Whig convention of 1848 are merely an eulogy of General Taylor. Not until 1852 do we find the Whigs also making this conscious effort to set forth the basal principles of the party as well as their views on current questions. The effort is more marked than in the Democratic platform of 1840 . I quote such portions only, as illustrate the point in question:(1)

"The Whigs of the United States, in convention assembled, adhering to the great conservative principles by which they are governed, and now as ever relying upon the intelligence of the American people, with an abiding confidence in their capacity for self government and their devotion to the constitution and the Union, do proclaim the following as the political sentiment and determination for the establishment

(1) McKee. Platforms, p. 44-45.

and maintenance of which their national organization as a party was effected:

First. The government of the United States is of a limited character, and is confined to the exercise of powers expressly granted by the constitution, and such as may be necessary and proper for carrying the granted powers into full execution, and that powers not granted or necessarily implied are reserved to the states respectively and to the people.

Second. The State Governments should be held secure to their reserved rights, and the General government sustained in its constitutional powers, and that the union should be revered and watched over as the Palladium of our liberties.

Third. That while struggling freedom everywhere enlists the warmest sympathy of the Whig party, we still adhere to the doctrines of the Father of his country, - - -of keeping ourselves free from all entangling alliance with foreign countries, - - - -.

Fourth. That as the people make and control the government, they should obey its constitution, laws and treaties as they would retain their self respect and the respect which they claim and will enforce from foreign powers."

The four following paragraphs relate to the tariff, internal improvements and the Fugitive slave law.

I have purposely confined myself to the two principal parties, since it is the developement of the platform which I wish to show. The statement of Professor Sumner, that new parties without traditions need a formal statement of principles, applies to the Liberty, Free Soil, Republican and American conventions from 1844 to 1856. All of these parties put forth a formal declaration of principles. It remains to be noted that this conscious effort to set forth the party principles as well as the party policy, which, as I have tried to show, first appears in the Democratic resolutions of 1840, and in the Whig resolutions of 1852, coincide in point of time, with the idea of the authority of the convention. Just how early the platform was considered as a pledge to be redeemed in case of success, is much more difficult, perhaps impossible, to determine. But it can hardly be doubted that this too, occurred during the same period, --- the period when states ceased to nominate; when no true partisan defied the decision of the convention; and when the statement of principles was becoming so definite and important that any violation of them must inevitably bring down charges of faithlessness upon the heads of those who offended.

BIBLIOGRAPHY OF WORKS USED IN THE PREPARATION OF THIS ESSAY.

---

1. Adams, Henry. History of the United States. 9 Vols. Scribbners. N. Y. 1890.
2. Adams, John Quincy Memoirs of John Quincy Adams. J. B. Lippincott, 1875.
3. Andrews, Neil The Developement of the Nominating Convention in Rhode Island. Published in Brown University Seminary Papers. I.
4. Hammond, J. P. The Political History of the State of New York. 3 Vols. 1852.
5. Hart, A. B. Essays on Government. 1893.
6. Hildreth, Richard History of the United States. 6 Vols. Harpers. 1880.
7. Houghton, W. R. History of American Politics. Indianapolis. 1883.
8. Ireland, J. R. The Republic, or a History of the United States in the Administrations. 18 Vols. Chicago. 1886.
9. Jenkins, J. S. History of Political Parties in the State of New York. Auburn. 1849.
10. Jepshon, Henry The Platform. 2 Vols. Macmillan ~~Massachusetts~~. 1892.

11. Journal of the National Republican Convention of December 12, 1831.

12. Lalor, J. J. Cyclopaedia of Political Science, Political Ecomomy and of the Political History of the United States.

13. Lawton, G. W. American Caucus System. Putnam. 1885.

14. McKee, The National Platform of all Political Parties from 1789-1892. Washington, D. C. 1892.

15. McKnight, D. A. The Electoral System. Philadelphia, 1878.

16. McMaster, J. B. History of the People of the United States, Appleton & Co., 1894.

17. Meigs, W. M. Pennsylvania's Politics Early in the Century. Published in the Pennsylvania Magazine of Biography and History. January, 1894.

18. Miller, F. H. Nominating Conventions in Pennsylvania. MS. A Master's Thesis in the Library of the University of Wisconsin.

19. Niles, H. The Weekly Register. Vols. 1-74.

20. Parton, James The Life of Andrew Jackson. 3 Vols. N. Y. 1860.

21. Patten, J. Harris The Democratic Party: its History and Influence. N. Y. 1884.

22. Porter, L. H. Outlines of the Constitutional History of the United States. N. Y. 1887.

23. Press and Tribune Documents for 1860. No. 3.

24. Proceedings of the Democratic National Conventions---- 1852. 1856. 1860. 1864. 1868. 1872. and 1884.

25. Reemelier, Chas. A Critical Review of American Politics. Cincinatti. 1881.

26. Schurg, Carl Henry Clay, in American Statesman Sries. Houghton, Mifflin & Co. 1895.

27. Shepard, E. M. Martin Van Buren. American Statesman Series.

28. Smith, Goldwin. The United States; An Outline of Political History. Macmillan & Co. 1893.

29. Stanwood, Edward A History of Presidential Elections. Boston. 1884.

30. Sumner, W. G. Andrew Jackson. American Statesman Series. 1895.

31. Tucker, George The History of the United States from their Colonization to the End of the Twenty Sixth Congress in 1841. 4 Vols. J. B. Lippincott. 1856.

32. Van Buren, Martin Political Parties in the United States, Houghton. 1867.

33. Von Holst, H. The Constitutional and Political History of the United States. Translated by J. J. Lalor and A. B. Mason. Chicago, 1877.

34. Wilson, Woodrow Division and Reunion. Longmans. 1894.

According to Mr. Bryce,---American Commonwealth, II. p. 145, foot note - - -an interesting sketch of the history of congressional caucuses and presidential nominations is to be found in the "Annales de l'Ecole libre, des Sciences Politeque" for January and April, 1888. I have not seen the article referred to.

The chief source of information has been the newspapers of the period, as cited in footnotes. Of these the most important are "The National Intelligencer" "The Philadelphia Aurora;" "The Philadelphia Gazette;" "The Richmond Enquirer;" "The Salem Gazette;" "The Boston Patriot" etc.

After 1812, the best single source as well as the most ~~convention~~ comment, is Niles Weekly Register. It is fairly well indexed and by looking under various headings,---such as "Convention," "Caucuses," "Presidential" "Electioneering," "Nominations," etc., full information may be obtained.

The secondary authorities are not free from mistakes and should be used with care.

Approved, and recommended for special honors

Frederick J. Turner

May 28, 1896

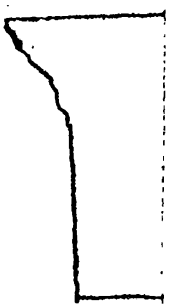
Professor of American History

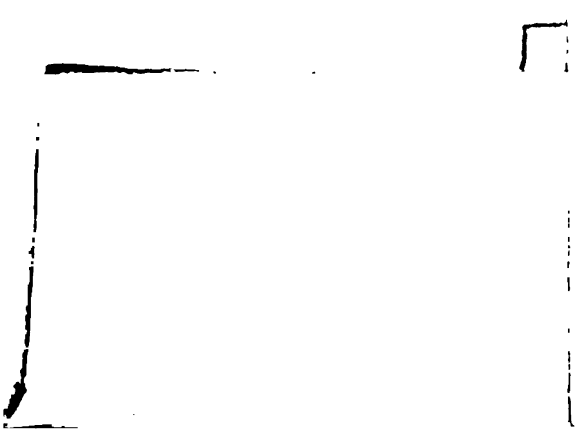
Status Plan

By La

By

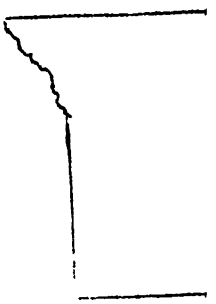
By





States Nom

- ☐ by le
- ☐ by C
- ☐ by b



89085924595

b89085924595a

Date Loaned